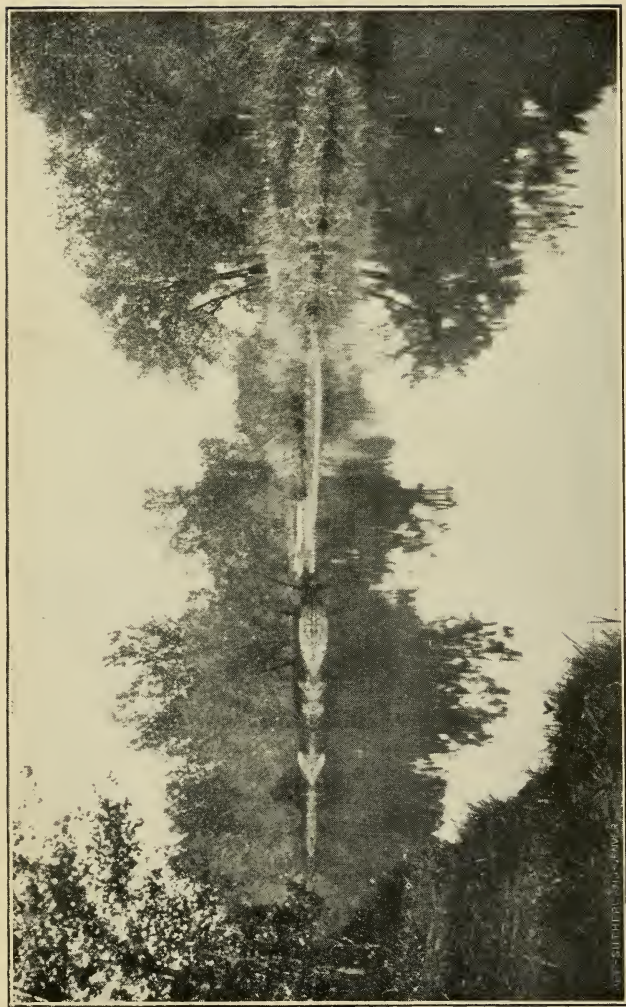


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ON THE CACHE LA POUDRE.

"Its placid waters mirror them in grand
And lovely pictures, framed by shadowy trees."—*Page 13.*

PEN PICTURES *of the PLAINS*

BY

SARAH ELIZABETH HOWARD



DENVER

THE REED PUBLISHING COMPANY

1902

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TO THOSE WHO LEFT LOVED HOMES AND
FRIENDS IN SETTLED PORTIONS OF OUR
LAND, TO WIN NEW HOMES AND FRIENDS
UPON "THE GREAT AMERICAN DESERT,"
THIS LITTLE BOOK IS DEDICATED BY
THE AUTHOR.

THANKS ARE DUE TO "GOOD HOUSEKEEPING"
AND "SUNSHINE" FOR COURTESIES EXTEND-
ED; ALSO FOR DATA GATHERED FROM "THE
UTE WAR."

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*PEN PICTURES
OF THE PLAINS*

A PRAIRIE IDYL

INTRODUCTION

A simple story of the plains;
Writ long ago in hearts that lightly beat
With love and joy, and hope; or dumbly ached
With anguish and despair. A simple tale
That has no call to be, except, that it
Was lived, and may be lived a thousand times
Again. Small reason, one may say, to pen
The lines. And yet all lives flow not in strong
Deep currents; many rivulets must feed
The powerful stream; with countless little
deeds

The work of one short day is filled; and lives
Grow sweet and strong by faithful following

Of dull, hard lines that never rise above
The commonplace.

THE RIVER

A still bright day in March.
The tiresome, noisy wind forgets to blow.
The sun, from out a sky of cloudless blue,
Pours Summer's warmth upon the prairies,
bare,
And brown, and dusty. Hushed and lifeless,
all
The scene. Gnarled trees outline the river's
course,
And stretch their naked branches high, as
though
Appealing to the smiling Heavens, for gift
Of verdure's grace, to hide their rugged forms.

The Cache la Poudre, now a shrunken stream,
Glides peacefully along, and murmurs low,
As placidly it winds through banks deep cut
By torrents rushing over sandy soil,

Or broadens out, to lave a pebbly shore.
The wild impetuosity is gone,
That freed it from its mountain home, and sent
It plunging, foaming down, exultant, wild,
Down, down, past boulders broad, that block
and fret,
But cannot hold; down, down, the sides of hills
Rock-faced, through wooded vales, and on, and
on,
To gain the restful quiet of the plains,
Where it may almost pause at times, to note
The beauty of the azure sky, the sun's
Glad light, the fleeting clouds, the moon's mild
beams,
The stars that gem the midnight sky, and in
Its placid waters mirror them, in grand
And lovely pictures, framed by shadowy trees.

THE MOVERS

Along the road, that follows near the course
The river takes, or climbs the bluff to find
A shorter path, appears a wagon, wide

And long, and loaded well with household
goods;

Two horses, broad of back and heavy limbed,
The wagon draw. A nest, of mattresses
And pillows piled, well planned for when the
load

Was built, make safe and full of ease the ride
For those who snuggle there,—a laughing babe,
A prattling girl, a manly boy, and one
Who watches o'er, as mothers do, the three
To her so dear; and he, who holds above
The horses guiding lines, and cheers them on
In tones they understand,—his look of proud
Content, his interest in all, proclaim
His ownership—love-granted—of the group.

DREAMS

The driver and his team, have traveled oft,
The road so long and wearisome; but all
The way is new to her, who thinks to see
At every turn, or from each hill top gained,
The lone, new house, that is to be her home.

She backward looks. There lies the little town
Whose buildings, in the distance seem like toys
Upon a mammoth table spread; and there
She fancies that she still can see the one
That was her home, the while the house upon
The plains was being built.

Again she looks
Around. Upon the right, the left, above,
Below, there meets her unaccustomed sight,
The same monotony of earth and sky.
The cradled motion, and the drowsy air,
Have caused the little ones to sleep.
The weary mother veils her eyes to shield
Them from the glaring light, and gently, sleep
From her too, wins all consciousness of things
At hand. The prairie sights and sounds, no
more
She sees, or hears. And yet the active brain
Sleeps not; for dreaming, she beholds again
What in her waking hours she scarce dares trust
Herself to think about;—a spot most loved,
Most dear,—her childhood's home—unmindful
that

The half of one vast continent is stretched
Between herself and it. She sees the low,
Wide spreading house, whose massive beams,
a hand,—

Her father's hand—hewed long ago from oaks
He felled to clear a spot where it might stand.
She plays again, beneath the giant trees
That like loved sentinels, were left to guard
The door; whose sheltering branches interlaced,
And made a royal canopy above
The play-ground of her youth; and whose
broad leaves

The sunlight and the moonlight made to dance
In shadows on her chamber floor. She sees
The windows, over which the roses climb;
The garden walk, the flowers her mother loved
And tended. Then she sees that other home,—
The one she entered when a bride, and where
Her little children came to her, and made
A happy life more blest and brighter still.
More plainly than aught else she sees, or seems
To see, the growing things; the grass that
clothes

With richest green, the little eminence



CRYSTAL SPRAY.

"Shall coax his treasures down the rocky sides
In dancing rivulets."—*Page 22.*

Where stands the low, old-fashioned house,—
the old

Red house. The daisies nod, as if to say,
“Come, let us tell your fortune, as of yore.”
The red, round blossoms of the clover, load
The air with fragrance, well remembered; and
The rich deep-colored buttercups sway back
And forth upon their slender stems, and tempt
Her once again to pluck their yellow blooms,
And try the old-time test, that tells “Who loves
The butter.” More than all the rest, the trees
A welcome lend. The pines that shade the
drive

Upon the east, a gentle murmur, soft
And low, send forth. The elms and maples
from

The western side, their branches wave, until
Each blithesome leaf is dancing in the air.
The spire-like firs, that guard on either hand
The door, in sighing whispers, welcome her,
Whose gentle word forbade the cruel axe
To lay their beauty low. Above the door,
The jessamine hangs drooping, as of old.
Around the windows twine—a living frame—

The woodbine, free to thrust its tendrils in
Each weather-beaten crack, and hold its place
With sturdy will. With joy, surprise, she
notes

The trumpet vine, her hand had planted; what
A growth! It spreads its glossy leaves upon
The roof, and clustered blossoms crown it
there;

Her hand she stretches forth to pluck one
flower,—

So little mindful are we in our dreams
Of time and space—and speedily, the scene
Is changed. The horses by the driver stopped,
Upon the summit stand of rising ground,
There halted that the better she may view
What lies before. The ceasing motion wakes
The sleeper, speeds the dream.

THE NEW HOUSE

“Look, Margaret!”

Her husband’s voice she hears; across her eyes
She lightly draws a hand to hide the tears,—

The smarting, blinding tears, that sprang unbid
When she awoke, and knew that she had
dreamed.

For Roland must not know,—he must not guess
How much she misses trees, and flowers, and
grass,—

For seldom does the prairie wear a robe
Of green, as bright, as lovely, as the fields
She used to roam,—nor must he know how
much

She misses and desires to see the dear,
Familiar faces. Now he speaks again:

“Look, Margaret! There stands the house—
the house

Where my dear wife shall make for me, a
home.”

Across the prairie, scarce a mile away,
The new, unfinished house stood, all alone.
Much taller than it really was, it looked,
Because no other objects clustered near,—
No trees, no buildings, only, half the way
Between the wagon and the house, there stood
A ranchman's settlement. A little house,

A barn and sheds, corrals, and ditches plowed,
Told that it must have been a home, a year
At least. Here lived a German family,—
Newcomers there—but still old settlers in
The West, since first the prairie schooners
trailed

At snail-like pace—by goaded oxen drawn—
Across the dreary, desert sea of sand.

A PRAIRIE SCENE

A pretty portion of the scene lay just
Below. A basin broad and deep, worn in
The prairie's undulating levelness
By rushing waters in the ages past;
Down through its center, sang a silvery stream,
Meandering from right to left; the grass
Sprang up on either side, and by its bright,
Delightful green, declared the distance that
Its searching roots had quenched their burning
thirst

As the cool waters rippled by. Adown
A steep decline, across the basin's floor,

Now hiding at the little ford, its path
As winding as the streamlet's way, the road
Gleamed white, until it disappeared upon
The farther bluff.

The beauty of the scene
A glance took in,—its loneliness as well.
The western sun now flooded all with rays
Whose softened yellow light, betokened that
The day was nearly spent, and urged the need
Of haste. Again they journeyed on; and all
The way was filled with plans, that when ma-
tured,
Should make the prairie home a lovely place,—
A spot to rest the eye upon,—a real
Oasis in the desert.

THE HOME MAKING

Days have passed;
The making of the home goes slowly on;
From chaos, order steadily evolves;
And yet, so incomplete the state of things,
Within, without, that strength and patience
scarce

Can bear the call incessant, for the work
Of hands, that falls upon so few. How great
The task to make a home, when every brick
And stick, and stone, that goes to build a house,
Must be transported miles and miles, by man
And beast. Where deep are hid the springs that
must

Be found, and forced to yield their sparkling
gift

Of water, clear and cool. Where not a grain
Of wheat bestows its bearded wealth, till from
The river to the spot where it must grow
A channel has been made to carry there
The snow and ice that Winter stored within
The mountain fastnesses, when the warm
breath

Of May and June, unloosing his cold clasp,
Shall coax his treasures down the rocky sides
In dancing rivulets. Where e'en the soil,—
The cacti-guarded soil,—sun-baked and hard,
Forbids the sharpened plow to turn its sod,
Until its surface has received a flood,—
Descended from the clouds, or lacking that,
A flood drawn from the river's tide.

But still,
Each day some comfort adds. Each day be-
holds
Some task begun, or carried forward. Time
And thought, and strength are given. In re-
turn
There comes a welcome sense of homelikeness;
Homelike, and yet not *home*. What wonder
that
With eyes tear-blinded, Margaret should ask
Herself, "Can this bare country ever make
A home for me? For me, who loved so well
The stately oaks about my childhood's home,
The stretch of pines where I might wander
hours,
And hours, delighted with their fragrance, and
Their gentle murmurings, and find enough
To hold me spellbound, in the tiny leaves
That trailed across the dim aisles at their feet,—
A tracery of green, against the soft,
Brown carpet, made of fallen needles? There,
Low hills and vales o'ergrown with trees that
held
Aloft, in Spring, their tasseled, petaled flowers,
And waved in Summer, dainty robes of green;
Where in the Autumn, choicest tints of gold

And scarlet, hid the bounteous harvest spread,
Of nuts and fruits, and made the landscape
rich

With pictures, words may not portray. And
here,

No tree in sight, save where the cottonwoods
Upon the river's bank—a mile away,—

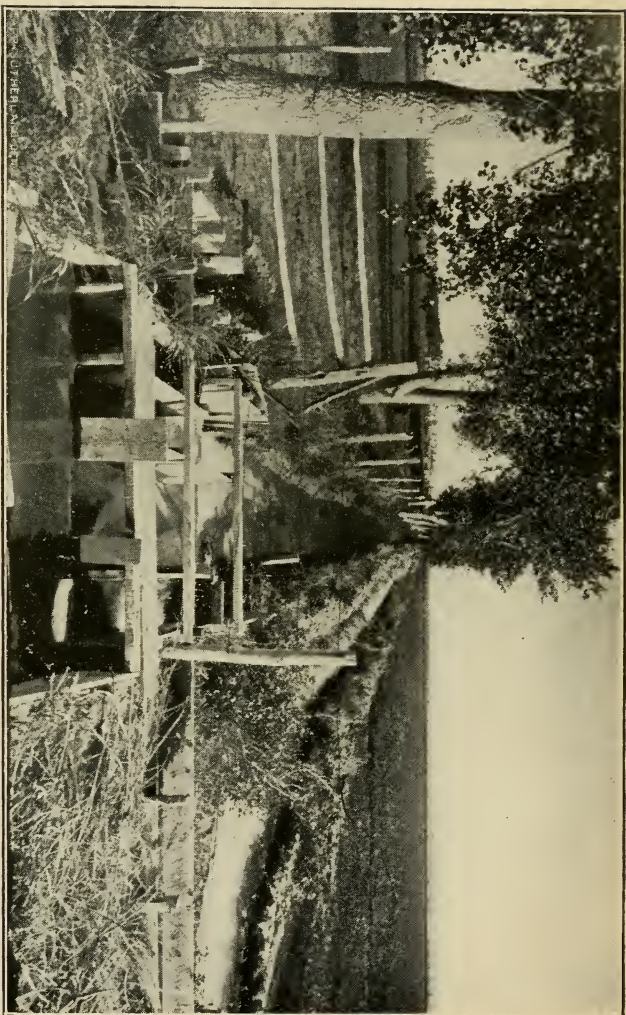
Find water so that they can thrive and grow;
No sheltered nooks where hide surprises rich
With Flora's gifts. Naught, but the sun-
browned plains,

Wind-swept and desolate. Can this be home?"

THE WIND STORM

The moisture of early spring has made
It possible to plow the ground and seed
It; but for weeks no rain has fallen on
The thirsty, sun-dried land. The stubborn soil
Resists the plow. The seeds refuse to grow.
For lack of Nature's tears, their hearts will not
With sympathy enlarge, and opening, send
Their tender sprouts to bless the land.

For days
The clouds have floated from the mountain
tops



AMONG THE FARMS.

"The sparkling waters sing through banks flower-fringed
And verdant."—*Page 39.*

And spread upon the sky, their folds, so full
Of promise; then retaining all their wealth
Of rain-drops, coveted and needed, furled
Their banners dark, and sailed from sight.

The wind

Now boisterous and rioting, lifts from
The earth, a cloud of dust, and whirling sticks,
And straws; it pelts with gravel stones that cut
Like sleet, the luckless one, unsheltered from
Its wrath. From out the sandy soil it tears
The wheat, that early rains have sprouted; veils
The nearer objects with its stolen cloud,
And shrieks and howls, like some mad spirit,
free
To do its worst.

A VISITOR

Now Margaret, on such
A morn, half terrified, alone, except
The fellowship of her own little ones,
Heard open wide, as if wind flung, a door,
And hastening there to close it 'gainst the blast,
Upon her threshold met, all scant of breath,
And panting from her battle with the storm,
Her German neighbor woman, knitting work

In hand, and joyed to see her there,—her words
Of welcome feebly told how much.

“I saw,”

The neighbor said,—her accent scarce betrayed
Her foreign birth,—“your husband on his way
To town; and when the wind began to blow,
I knew right well how dreary it must seem
To you; and so I came to help you keep
Your courage up; if you are not afraid,
You’re braver far, than I, when first I saw
The air so filled with sweepings of the earth.”
“Have you then lost all fear?”

“The noisy wind

It wearies me; it wears my patience out;
It sifts the dust through every crevice in
The house; and yet, it seldom gives much cause
For fear; the mountains are so near to us,
We think they break its force.”

“Is this dry spring

Unusual, or have you seen the like
Before?”

“Aye, many times; if you had had
Your ditches made and turned the water on
The sod before ’t was plowed, then would your
seeds

Have started. One cannot do all things in

A minute. Well it was for you, the soil
Was wet enough to *plow*. Now, your good
man

Will furrow out the corn, and irrigate
Between the rows, spread gentle floods upon
Alfalfa sown, and wheat, and you shall see
How water makes the green oases in
The desert."

"How long has this bare country been
Your home?"

"Why, long enough to make a home
And lose it. Long enough to start anew
With younger people, like yourself. I left
My childhood's home, where high the Alps up-
lift

Their snow-crowned heads, a bride; and now
I count

My children's children, kiss their rosy cheeks
And feel their clinging arms around my neck."

"Please tell me, friend, what made you choose
this land

To be your own? I question, for I love
To hear another's voice; 'tis music in
My loneliness. And then I fain would know
How other women lived, who knew in truth
The hardships of the pioneer."

“Because
We speak that language, people say that we
Are Germans; just as truly might they call
Us French. We came from Switzerland. The
love

Of liberty is in our veins, and that
Is why we made America our choice.
We thought to seek the western coast and make
Our fortune in its mines of gold; but when
The train of emigrants was formed, and well
Upon the way, we heard that dread disease
Was raging there. Our oxen crippled with
The constant travel. Fertile lands around
Us, tempted us to stay. We dropped behind.
Our fellow travelers journeyed on, and we
Were left alone, to make as best we could
A living in Missouri's wilds. Four walls
Of logs, without a floor or roof, was all
The shelter that I had for months. 'Twas there
My first born saw the light. We gathered
'round

Us, in the years we settled there, a few
Of life's necessities, but little of
Its comforts. Sickness laid its hold upon
My husband. Strength for work, no longer did

He have. There seemed but one thing left for
us,—

To seek for health amid new scenes. We then
Had heard a little of the healing power
Of Colorado's air, so light and dry;
And so we rounded up our little herd,
And once again a prairie schooner was
Our home,—our home on wheels. We traveled
weeks

And months, until we saw, far in the west,
The mountain tops, snow white, against the
sky;

And still, another day; and then at night
We camped beside the Platte; and there with
grass

And water for our stock, again we tried
To make a home."

"Were you so fortunate
As I? Had you a neighbor?"

"On the creek
Were ranches where white settlers lived, too far
Away to be much help or company.
I had some visitors you might not care
To know. The Indians often passed our way
And seldom failed to call."

“And were you not
Afraid of them?”

“Sometimes; but then, I knew
Too much to let them find it out; I learned
To raise my voice and scold until they thought
I was the bravest woman on the creek.

You know we had no railroads then; we
bought

Supplies in Denver; sold our produce there;
It took a week to make the trip; the men
From all the ranches went together. Once,
When they were gone, a band of red men passed
Our way, and knowing that the women were
Alone, they frightened and annoyed us much.
They were Arapahoes, returning to
Their camp upon Crow Creek. I knew their
tribe

Because they told me—pointed at themselves
And proudly said, “Me Rapho!” Groups of
two

And three my callers were; I dared
Not feed them; if I did, I knew they would
Return, not once, but many times. Outside
The house I hid all eatables, except
A loaf of bread, to give my children should
The red men stay too long; and that I placed

Among our clothing in a trunk. When they
Insisted on a search for food,—then wide
I opened empty closets, boxes, jars,
With hands not gentle, saying with a voice
Made loud and scolding, “See! there’s nothing

here,

Or *here!* or *here!* So brave and unconcerned
Was I, they little guessed how much with fear
I trembled: this was not what they wished
to hear,

And one old dirty brave held up his hands,—
With fingers spreading wide,—the way they
count

By tens, and tens, and said, “Heap Injun, come
And kill white squaw;” and then I showed no
sign

Of fear; in truth I was not much afraid:
I knew that when they meant to kill, they came
At just before the break of day, and then
They did not parley. Once, three red men
came,

And shouted, “Sleepie wigwam!” “No!” I
said,

“You can’t sleep here! Your wigwam is on
Crow—

Go there!” I held the door fast shut, and was

So firm, they laughed and went away. I had
Less trouble than the other women did
With them. That proved 'twas wiser not to
yield
To their demands."

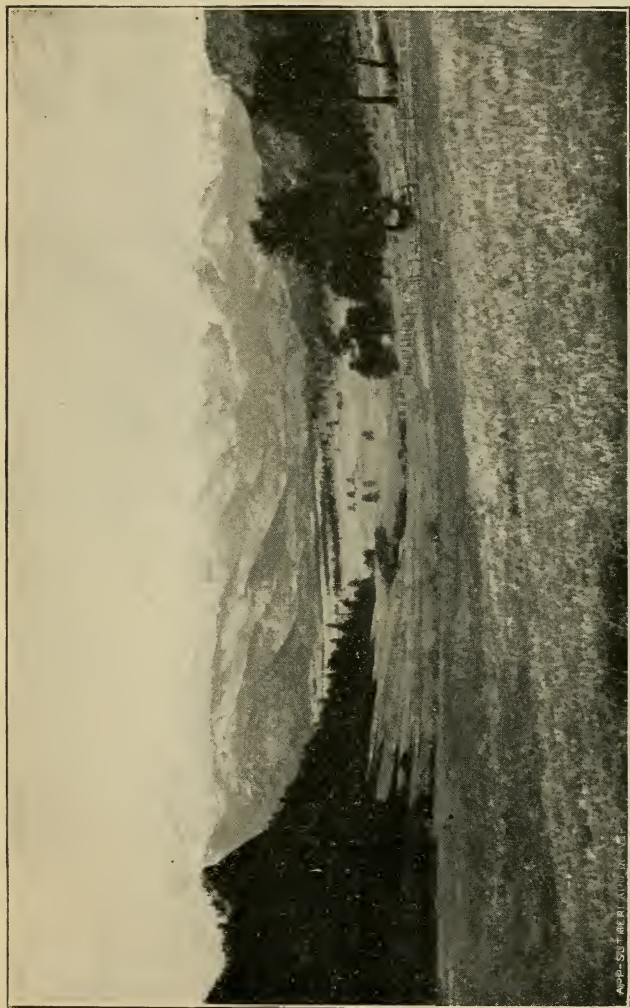
"How were they dressed?"

"They wore

In winter, robes of buffalo; and in
The summer, blankets; not much else; but if
A brave *should* wear a hat, he usually
Wore two, placed one above the other. One,
He must have been a chief, wore feathers in
His hair, and crossed his breast and wound his
waist

With strings of silver dollars, flattened out,
And lapped upon each other, till they must
Have been a heavy weight to bear. We feared
Them really, when the civil war broke out;
Bad men—deserters and the like,—then put
Them up to doing harm. 'Twas then the Plum
Creek massacre occurred, and no one knew
But what an Indian was behind each knoll
To shoot him down. It made my blood run
cold

The danger we were in; and when we had
To stay alone,—the children and myself,—



THE SNOWY RANGE.

“And all the Western sky is cut in scallops by
The snow-crowned mountain peaks against its blue.” —Page 34

We dared not sleep beneath our roof, for fear
It might be burned above our heads. I stole
Out after dark and made a place for them
To sleep among the weeds and willows by
The river; often dared not leave them there
One night, but took them up and carried them
Asleep, to other places,—sometimes moved
Them more than once before the night was
gone.

I early taught them all to know and write
Their names, that it might help us find them,
should

The red men steal them from us.”

“Trials that
I thought were mine, fade into nothingness
Beside the hardships it has been your lot
To bear,” said Margaret.

“In every life
Hard places come, and mine has had its share.
You have not told me yet, how well you like
Your house, and if it seems like home to you.”

“Since living here the sun has risen in
The east,” said Margaret; “in that it seems
Like home; before, I was so lost and turned
About, it seemed to me as if the sun rose in

The north; but when the house was being
built,—

The house I had not seen until 'twas fit
To shelter us, my husband said such words
As these, 'The kitchen faces to the east,
And there you'll have the morning sun.' Or
these,

'The view is lovely from the sitting-room;
The southern windows look upon Pike's
Peak—

You'll see it when the sun is low,—and all
The western sky is cut in scallops by
The snow-crowned mountain peaks against its
blue.'

So was I righted as to compass points.
And then, I have my loved ones here; for me,
Not Heaven itself, could be a home, were they
Not there. If one who had authority,
Should say to me, 'To-day go back and live
Among the scenes you love so well,' I would
Not heed the words, because I am so glad
To see my husband gaining health. To have
Him know the joy of breathing full, free
breaths—

The gift that Colorado's wondrous air
Bestows upon those sufferers who seek

Her plains and mountains, while there yet is
hope

For them. And yet, in spite of all, there comes
At times, a longing for the dear old home,
The dear, dear faces, till it makes me sad,
And easily the tears would come, but that
I hold them back.

My husband? Yes, he liked
Here from the first; he says there's something
in

The novelty and freedom of this life,
That suits him well. But I imagine that
Its hardships wear upon the women more
Than on the men. The loneliness, and lack
Of comforts that the settler must endure,—
They feel more deeply. Care of children and
Of home, so often shuts them in from change
They need and would enjoy."

With now and then
A pause to listen to the howling wind,
The neighbors chatted on; and in the skilled
Accustomed hands the knitting grew apace;
While Margaret found work to busy her
In caring for her house and little ones.
With wonder eyes, young Earl had listened to
The tales of frontier life; but longing for

The wind to cease that he might ride upon
His pony's back, he took his seat where he
Could watch the storm, and was the first to see
The dust clouds lessen, note the welcome lulls,
And know the storm would soon be o'er. The
veil

Of dust laid low, the sun shines forth upon
The wind-swept land. The piles of rubbish
found

In sheltered corners, tell how thoroughly
The sweeping has been done. The absent one,
Wind-tossed and weary, now returns. The kind
And thoughtful neighbor seeks her home.
Night falls

Upon a restful quiet, sweet as sleep.

THE DRY, DRY EARTH

The days are warm, excepting when the sun,
Veiled by the passing clouds, is lost to sight;
Or when it sinks behind the mountain tops
To gladden other lands, and leaves the night
To reign. Oft, then a sudden coolness
comes,—

The breath from snow-bemantled, frigid peaks.

Spring, slowly wakes to life, scant plants and
seeds
That slumbered in the dry, dry earth. And
still
No rain.

Each day the work with plow and spade
Goes on, and greater length is added to
The channels that shall draw the water from
The mountain stream, to quench the dry Earth's
thirst,
And resurrect the seeds entombed, and burst
Their bonds, and bid them spring to larger life
In God's glad sunshine.

RATTLESNAKES

Longer days and warmth,
Awaken slumberers less welcome than
Unfolding leaves. Half dormant, from the sod,
Plow-turned, they crawl. In sunny spots they
coil
And sleep. Where thorns and color hide them
well,
Through cactus beds they glide. Across the
paths
Oft trod by human feet, they slowly drag

Their mottled length. Disturbed;—defiant,
clear,
And shrill, their whirring rattle warns;
And quickly coiled, they spring their length to
strike
With poison fangs, the angry, fatal blow.

The enmity declared in Eden, still
Exists; and man shall bruise the serpent's head,
Till, overcome at last, the hidden foe
No more, with evil threatens childhood's play,
Or him, who walks upon, or tills the soil.

IRRIGATION

At last the channels have been made that shall
Convey the thirsty land, the cooling draft,
That rippling, dimpling, on its busy way,
Bids hidden seed and fainting plant, take heart
And grow. The stream that foamed and fret-
ted down

The mountain side, a rushing torrent made
By melting snows too strong and turbulent
To keep within the river's banks, full well
May spare the portion of its flood, required
To make the sun-baked prairie green and glad.

Barred from the river's swollen tide, it turns
No longer where it wayward will, but on
It speeds through channels skillfully devised;
And smaller streams, by its free bounty fed,
Divide and sub-divide, till o'er the land
The sparkling water sings through banks,
 flower-fringed,
And verdant.

 Oh! the joy! the joy! when first
The long-expected, welcome water, came;
Came creeping, rippling, dancing, singing.
 through
The earth-brown, dusty ways.

 All things grew glad.
The tiny seeds that long had dormant lain,—
Awoke to life, and joyous, sent their green
Leaves forth; fair heralds of the fragrant
 flowers
They soon would wave in air.

 On pliant stem,
The dainty primrose nods and smiles at its
Reflected image. Balls of snow-white bloom,
Amid the leafage green, are trailed along
The banks, till all the air is heavy with
The odor sweet, abronia delights

To yield. The scarlet mallows gleams and
glows,

And countless unnamed blossoms scent the air.

The cactus, from its guarded citadel,

Defiant, throws its banners out, and seems

Exultant that, unlike its rivals gay,

It thrives if water be withheld. In long,

Straight rows of green, distinct and bright,
against

The brown, brown earth, its peaceful blades,
the corn

Upholds. The water that the thirsty earth

Absorbed on either side the buried seed,

Has done its silent work. The acres to

Alfalfa sown, grow green, enlivened by

The gentle floods; and all take heart again.

The garden plants upspring, and seem to vie,

One with the other, in attempts to add

The inches to their length or height; so well

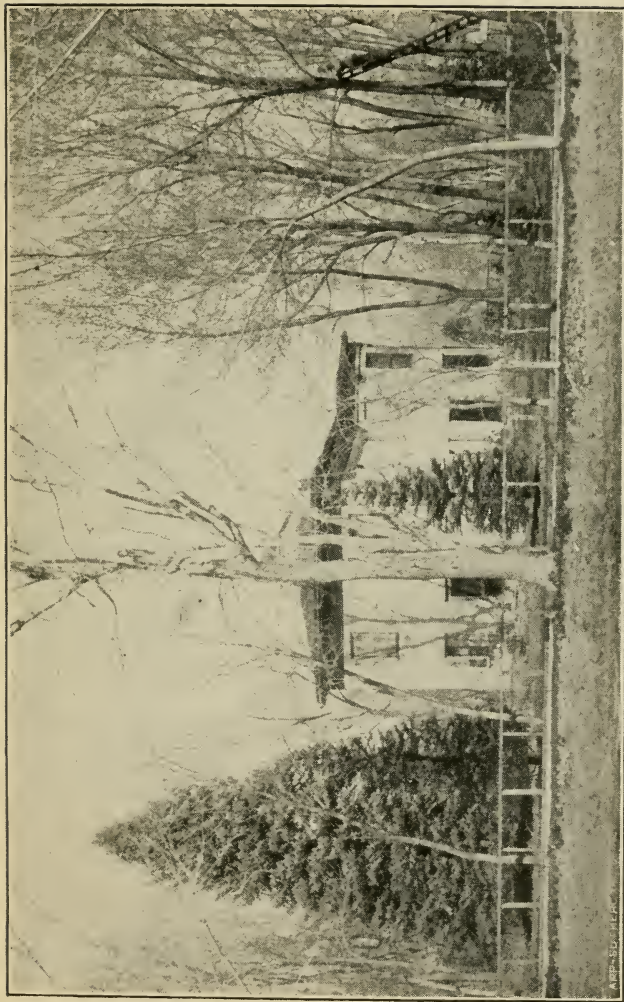
The foot baths and the sun baths suit them all.

Thus water works its wonders in a land

Where scorching days, and dewless nights
dry to

A crisp, the native grass upon the plains;

And as the standing grass is turned to hay,



THE MEEKER HOME.

"The house, commodious and well preserved,
That 'Father Meeker' built in early days." ---Page 104.

Imprison in each part,—each leaf and stem,—
The juices sweet, that have collected there;
And when the wintry storms, and bitter winds
Prevail, the quadrupeds that roam the vast
Expanse,—forlorn and shelterless,—find there,
The food that makes it possible for them
To live without the care of man.

So lived

The shaggy, bellowing herds of buffalo
That vanished from their old-time grazing
ground

Before the tide of empire's onward march,
And left no trace that they had ever lived,
Except the hollows in the ground, worn by
Their clumsy wallowing in the mire; or by
The bleaching bones of their old patriarchs,
That dropped from out the moving mass, near
some

Well-trodden path, and fell to rise no more.
So water works its wonders in a land—
A dreary, desert land,—till homes upspring,
And verdure clothes the plains,—the barren
plains—

And Nature's face grows bright and glad with
smiles;
And bounty blesses all.

THE COLONY FENCE

A stone's throw from
The house there stood a fence that stretched
 long arms
Around the little town and scattered homes,
For fifty miles or more, protecting them
As best it might, from animals turned loose
By man, to roam the plains and live there as
They could ;—vast herds of cattle all untamed,
And bands of horses that had never known
The breaker's bit.

THE COLONY

Within its boundaries
Brave men and women sought to make their
 homes,
And found a city that should stand in years
To come, a monument to Temperance ;—
A place uncursed by rum. For this, they left
Dear homes, kind friends, the opportunities
And comforts of the east, and here, beyond
The haunts of men, found room to work their
 will.
A Moses, full of faith and courage led

Them on. He chose the spot that was to be
A land of promise unto all who came.
Their household goods they gathered up and
far
They followed him. When first the desert
plains
They saw, some cursed aloud, and straightway
turned
Them back to Egypt's flesh-pots. Others said,
"We saw the cost and counted it; we came
To stay, and see this project through; it holds
A world of happy chances in it." Some
Bewailed their lot, and moaned, that they had
lost
Their all in coming here, and so were forced
To stay.

With naught between them and the stars
They set to work. A common shelter had
Been made, and many gathered there until
Their little houses could be built. With no
Foundation—lacking brick and stone—they
grew
Like mushrooms from the soil—the little homes
That meant so much to desert-stranded men
And women. Far, their sight outreached the
bonds

Their hopes. Beneath all this they made a
law,—

Inserted clause of forfeiture in each
And every deed of land they gave,—that he
Who dared to sell fermented drinks, should lose
His title to his land; and so they strove
To make it sure the town should never know
The curse that liquor traffic brings. Thus they
Foundation laid for future good. Amid
Discouragements both great and small, they
worked

And struggled on. Some came and went away;
And some remained; till from the restless tide
Of human life, the colony began
To grow in numbers, and in strength. The
cures,—

So wonderful—the healing air had wrought,
Were noised abroad, and many came to test
Its virtues; far too many came too late,
Who earlier coming, might have gained the
boon

Of health. But many came to know the joy
Of growing well and strong again; among
Them, Roland, with his little family.

MID-SUMMER

Midsummer's scorching heat is on the land,
And parched and brown becomes the earth, save
 where
The irrigating waters lend their cool
And life-sustaining current.

 Fields that once
Were barren as the land surrounding them,—
Ere man had turned the virgin soil, and poured
The river's flood upon it,—hold aloft
Their varied shades of green, and seem more
 bright
And beautiful by contrast.

 Forth the sun
In early morning peers from curtain clouds
With gold and crimson richly tinted; but,
Awakes no answering sparkle from the grass
The silent, passing night has left still dry
And dewless. Lined against the western sky,
Like faithful sentinels, the mountains stand,
And touched by morning's rays, their snow-
 crowned peaks,
Agleam with rainbow-tinted beauty, send
Responses to Aurora's benison.

Far north, as noonday heat approaches, where
No water, tree, or house the dull plains bear,
Appears what seems to be a limpid lake;
Or else, perchance, a little town is seen,
With trees and houses all presented there;—
A picture which the heated air projects,—
Delusive picture,—desert-born mirage.

The glowing heat would drain the energy
From man and beast, save that the whitened
peaks

With coolness freight the breeze that wanders
by,

And bears its grateful burden to the plains.

Outside the fence, the cattle wild, that see

A foe in man and never knew him as

A friend, and horses equally untamed,

Pass slowly down to where the low-drained
creek

But barely flows, to quench their thirst. They
file,—

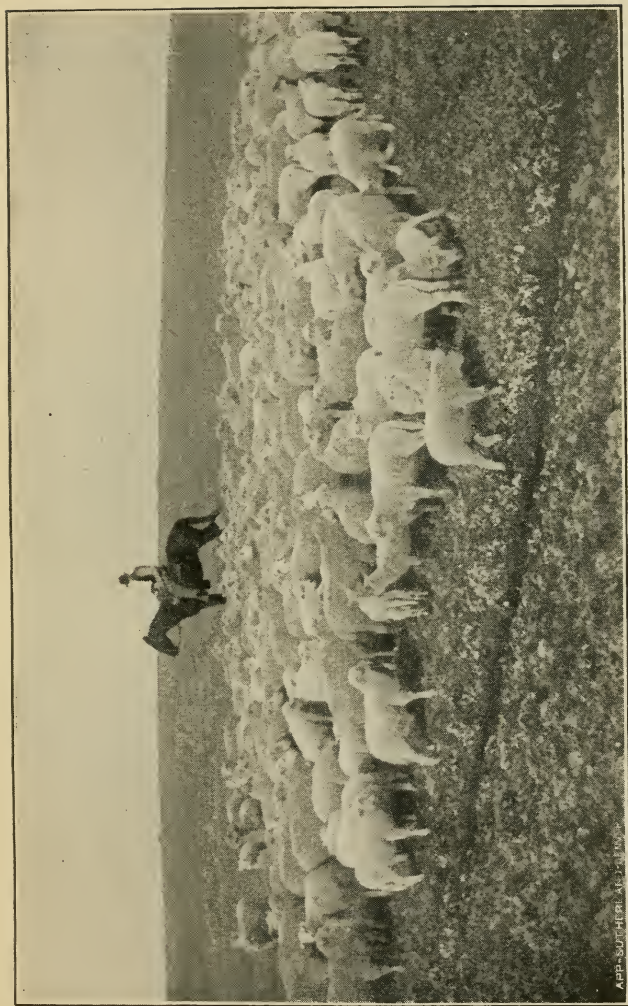
In little groups along the crooked paths

Their feet have worn in sod so tough and
dry,—

Between the cactus beds, and through the towns
The prairie dogs have made. From out their
holes—

Mound-guarded—cheery settlers come, and in
The sunshine sit and bark, or run from mound
To mound, as if on social calls intent.
Small owls—intrusive tenants, or perhaps,—
The marmots' guests, with dull and sleepy look,
Upon the mounds like images are set.

Adown the long dividing fence, a band
Of pretty, graceful antelope appear,
And pausing where the curving ditch upon
Their side its rippling waters offer, slake
Their thirst without a fear, nor question how
The chance should meet them there. With
eager heads
Uplifted high, and plaintive eyes, so brown
And beautiful,—as curious as Eve—
Still down the line they hold their way, as if
They seek to know what change has come to
pass
Upon their plains, where Roland's little home
Is reared. Then warned by slightest move-
ment, or
By sound, that peril may ensue, they fly
Across the prairies wide, with length'ning
bounds,
And feet that almost spurn to touch the earth:



PRAIRIE ROVERS.

"A herder with his dog and pony comes
To watch his white-fleeced flock."—*Page 73.*

Then turning—curiosity-impelled,
Draw near once more, as if they cannot bear
To leave the mystery unsolved; and then
With startled scent, as fleet as wind, behind
A rising point of ground they disappear.

From out the shelter of her little home
All this, does Margaret behold, and thinks
How like a lighthouse on an ocean rock
Her place of refuge is. As lies the tide
Around the reef, so lies the boundless plains
Around her door, and which is more alone?
Within her home, her children's voices fill
With happy shouts, her ear and heart. If those
They love, are well, and working on, and up,
How much of wearing burdens women learn
To bear with faith and patience, ever strong.

LOST

“The house is done, and death is at the door;”
How oft has time the proverb proven true.
Within the prairie home again events
Its aptness verifies. A shadow falls
And lifts not. Summer's fervid heat has
wrought

A change upon the youngest, frailest, there,
And baby Esther droops and fades away.
With anxious, aching hearts they seek the aid
The town can give, and hope increases when
At set of sun she falls into a sleep,—
A quiet sleep that seems to augur well.

With heart so glad and thankful, of its load
Relieved, about her household duties, light
Of step, and deft of hand, goes Margaret;
For, so she thinks, the morn will surely bless
Her with her babe's returning health. Alas,
For mother love! Ere strikes the hour of
nine

The little one awakes so ill that hope
Within her dies. In that dread hour they seek
For human aid, the aid they cannot find,
Except within the little town, an hour's
Long ride away. The only neighbor left
Her prairie home long since, to minister
To one beloved, by sickness helpless made.
Scarce twenty rods away, the horses graze,
With hobbled feet, so chained together that
They cannot stray. Assuring Margaret
That he will soon return, and begging her
To bravely keep her courage up, into

The darkness Roland hastens for the steeds
That must be had to make a hurried trip
To town. That not a moment may be lost,
His workman with him goes. He glances at
The dipper's seven stars, and notes the place
They hold above the house; for here and there
Are clouds, and once outside the fence, no sign,
No landmark, will they meet to show the way.
Upon the horses' heads they think at once
To lay their hands, or else to hear them bite
The grass, or clink their chains; but all goes
wrong,—

As if all things conspired against the life
So prized, so dear; for after searching long
In vain, at last they realize that they,
Themselves, are lost; are lost as wholly as
Two men can be.

The clouds have thickened in
The sky, and not a star sheds guiding light;
The wind that strongly blew from out the west,
Ere they had lost their compass points, may
guide

Them now; as men in sorest strait will catch
At straws, they think by walking facing it,
To find the fence, or else to see the lights

Of home. But all in vain. The wind has
changed,
Perhaps. One thing is certain; they are lost.
With dire forebodings filled of what this new
Misfortune means to him, and those so dear,
The anxious father strives in every way
To find again the doubly shrouded home.
To cover larger space of ground, they now
Take varying paths, and listening for a sound
To guide them, calling to each other, that
They may not separate beyond their range
Of voice, they seek to find their way from out
The labyrinth by darkness forced upon
Them. Lost! with neither compass, polar star,
Or light; for e'en the lighthouse home has failed
Them in this time of sorest need.

THE FEARFUL NIGHT

How fares
The lonely watcher in the lonely house,
So helpless in her dire necessity?
The suffering child becomes more ill each hour,
And from the tortured little body rings
The awful piercing cry that tells of brain
Affected; cry, that tears the mother's heart,

And fills her with the numbness of despair.
Earl's childish hands assist as best they can,
And all the simple means to give relief
The house affords, are tried. Awaking from
Her rosy, healthful sleep, in pitying tone,
And lispng accent, little Ruthie asks,
"What makes the darling baby cry so hard?"
"So sick! so sick!" the mother moans; "and he,
Who might have brought us help, is lost upon
The cruel plains; he must be lost, or else
Would he return." And so the fearful night
Drags slowly by, and morn is drawing near,
When Roland, pale and weary, comes.

"If I

Had only walked to town," he said; "I might
Have better walked there thrice, than walk
As we have walked this night. We went too far
To north, when first we started out, and then
We could not see your light, I later learned,
Because the shed that corners on this room,
And rising ground, between ourselves and it,
Completely hid it from us. Not until
We traveled miles, did we behold it; then,
We found the fence and near it kept until
We reached the house. We found the horses
where

They always are,—just east of here, and John
Has gone to bring the doctor out.”

Two hours,—

Two precious hours must pass before a chance
Of help is theirs; before is overcome
In least degree, the night's relentless foe,—
The settler's dreaded obstacle—great space.
With morning's light,—the doctor there—their
hope

Revives; but as the sunset's golden gleam
Falls softly on the earth below, the pure
Child-spirit takes its flight, as gently as
The flower that sleeps, its lovely petals folds
Together.

GRIEF'S LOAD

Hard, how hard, the mourner knows,
To lay the loved away, and turn again
To take life's daily burden up; to do
Again the work, whose kindly offices
No more can reach to them; to leave undone
What once was Love's fond offering; to live
O'er weighted with the sense of loneliness
And loss. Yet all must sometime bear Grief's
load;
The only choice allowed is, *how*.

Now, work
That must be done, the greatest blessing is ;
The faculties employed in kindly deeds
For others, gently draw the thoughts from self,
And teaches less to brood, with sighs and tears,
On sorrows past.

The days pass slowly by ;
The morning breaks ; the noon pours down its
heat ;

The night, its gath'ring shadows brightens with
Its train of countless stars ; alike on all
Day's changing aspect throws a light or shade ;
And hearts respond to Nature's moods, as they
Attuned to joy or sorrow are. The day
Arrives, that marks a year since first upon
Her angel child the sorrowing mother looked ;
What might have been, but is not, fills her
heart ;

Thoughts come demanding utterance ; her pen,
The medium between, she takes, and writes.

"A year ago to-day I held thee first
Within my loving arms. Where art thou,
sweet ?

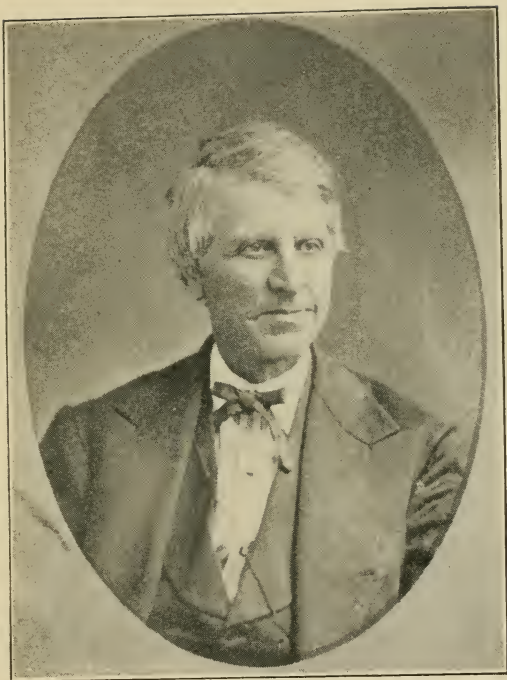
I see thee not. Thy cradle empty stands,
And thou art gone. Thy earthly home knows
thee

No more. I cannot cause this human heart
To cease to long for thee. Was mother love
Created changeless, deathless, but to have
Its tendrils rudely snapped, no more to be
United? This is thy birthday, and I,
Thy mother, cannot take thee in my arms;
Upon thy lips no birthday kiss can press;
For thou, a little while ago, didst have
Another birthday; through thine own suffer-
ings

Thou wast born into the realms immortal.
Why do I weep? What cause have I to mourn?
Thy little life has left no stain upon
Thy pure sweet soul; a snow-white bud thou
canst

Unfold in heaven's light, in loveliness
More lovely still, for this, thine early call.
Hadst thou staid here, my child, thou wouldst
have been

Another tie to bind me to the earth.
But now, thy little hands reach out to me
From that fair land, and still, a little child,—
An angel child,—shall lead me on. Hast thou,
My babe, no need of me? Canst thou at once
Become content to live apart from thine
Own mother? At every step I miss thy smile,



NATHAN C. MEEKER.

"The Moses of the colony again
The eager leader was—the Agent of
The government."—*Page 59.*

Thy merry shout, thy nestling head; then in
My grief I pray that thou knowst not the pangs
Of parting; that to thee my place be filled.
One moment, thou wast here, my baby, *mine*.
The next, thou wast an angel babe, and yet,
My baby still. And who shall say but what
To thee my loving, tender thoughts shall reach,
And make thee glad, as did my fond caresses?
There is a pleasure in the thought, though none
May say that it is truth. The grief I know,
Can never come to thee. My sorrow o'er
Thy grave has spared thy sorrow over mine.
My thoughts are full of thee, and thy new life."

THE AGENCY

The summer passed. September's glowing
days,
And frost-touched nights were vanishing, when
clouds
Of smoke appeared, and draped their murkiness
Upon the land. The rays of sun and moon
Were dimmed. The mountains, town, and river
trees
Were veiled from sight, and nearer objects
scarce

Could be descried. Men said, "Fierce forest
fires

Are raging in the hills." But none told why.
Not one of all the little town divined

What dreadful deeds that dismal cloud fore-
told.

For days and weeks, it shrouded like a pall
The land. Then came a rumor of the truth,—
The fearful, startling tales of massacre,—
Of peril and captivity, more hard
To bear than death.

Two years before, a band
Of earnest workers left their pleasant homes,
Within the fenced-in prairie town, to live
Far in the rugged mountain wilds, where dwell
The red-skinned Utes. It was to be their task
To care for them; to see that they received
The stores a government paternal, sent
Its savage wards; to teach them careful ways
That lead to comfort, peace, and plenty.

Men

Went there, at various times to aid the work;
An engineer, to plan the water-ways
That he who irrigates, must have; and men
To lay the native rock as masons do;

And other workmen went, to come again,
With no especial danger undergone.

The Moses of the colony, again
The eager leader was,—the Agent of
The government. With him he took his wife,—
Both now well past the three-score line of age—
His daughter fair, and young, and slight,—to
teach

Papooses, could they be induced to learn—
A blacksmith with his wife and infants two,
And farmers and mechanics;—men who went
To till the soil, build houses, ditches, barns,—
And show the unskilled Indian how he might
Improve his comfortless condition, should he
learn

To work. Two brothers from one home went
forth;

Of all those noble, stalwart men, but two
E'er saw their prairie homes and friends again;
One, by a train of circumstances, such
As oft occurs, was led to hasten home,
Without a thought of danger from the Utes,
When fatal would have been a week's delay;
And one, a messenger was sent from camp.
The leader, whom the colonists revered

And loved as "Father Meeker," took the work
In hand with zeal enthusiastic; chose
His helpers from the families that held
High rank for steadfastness, integrity,
And worth, and sought his duties to perform
With faithfulness and care.

THE INDIANS

The Indians loved
Not work; it angered them to see the sod
Their horses grazed upon, turned under by
The plow, though grass abounded, farther on.
Their pride would not allow young Utes to go
To school. Their women ridiculed a brave
Who tried to work. The "noble red men"
wished
To hunt and fish, and roam the mountains,—
free—
Not work like squaws. They claimed the land
was theirs,—
The Agent and his men were there to work
For them. The more they heard about the need
Of work, about the good to come from it,
The angrier they grew. This state of things
In letters reached the little town. Alarmed,

The friends and parents urged the need of haste
In leaving dangers so pronounced, but failed
To make impression on the men who thought
Themselves as safe as they within the fence,—
So far deceived were they by treacherous Utes.

At last the Agent saw that coaxing could
Not make the untrained savage work.
They grew more bold and insolent. Upon
The grounds, around the Agent's house, they
danced

Their wild, fantastic, fear-inspiring dance
The sign of war to come—and made the long
Night hideous with shouts and yells. At morn,
A messenger was sent to ask for troops
To give protection and enforce the rules
The government had made concerning its
Supplies.

For months before the bursting storm
Had shown a threat'ning cloud, and one who
knew
The Indian well, a warning would have read.
At times, the Denver papers published things
About the Utes that maddened them; the one
Who wrote them, doubtless, never thought the
braves

Would hear, or understand; but some one read
It all to them,—interpreted the words,
And cruelly, maliciously, it seems,
Made them believe the Agent wrote the tales.
Indignant, to the agency they went,
And angrily accused the gray-haired man
Of writing lies of them, and word for word
Repeated what the papers said.

One day,
A flaming headline came; "THE UTES MUST
Go!"

The Agent sadly laid his paper down,
And said, as if he felt presentiment
Of what awaited him, "The Utes must go;
But first, a sacrifice must be, and I,
Perhaps as well as any one, may fill
The place." The other men knew well the light
In which the good old man was placed, and
feared

For him at times, but little thought the Utes,
Who loved to be with them, and hear them
sing,

And play the violin, and talk, and laugh,
Could so forget their friendship as to wish
To harm the others at the agency.

The scattered settlers felt themselves unsafe,

And read their danger in such deeds as these,—
Their cattle driven off, or maybe killed ;
Large fires left to mark the homeward path
Of braves returning from some distant peak.

The Utes denied strange white men any right
To step upon their soil. This fact was shown
With all its frightful possibilities
When men from Denver traveled there to view
The place and interview the men. The first
The Agent knew of threatened trouble, Utes
Came running to his house, exclaiming, wild
With great excitement, "White men here!"
and in

An instant all the braves were armed and placed
In battle line, a horde against the few
Intruders who had risked their lives in this
Attempt. The Agent saw the danger, not
Alone to stranger whites ; for should the tribe
In deeds of lawlessness begin to act,—
Then all must suffer ; quick as thought he flung
The Stars and Stripes upon the breeze ; the
Utes,

Beneath its folds, a certain safety felt,
And quietly dispersed,—so quickly, that
They seemed within the ground to disappear.

Still holding that the white man should not
come,—

The sending for the soldiers angered them,
And grass was burned to make it difficult
For cavalry to reach their rocky heights.
The Utes on every hand applied the torch,
And mountains glowed with fiercest flames, and
grand
Old trees,—whole forests—blackened by them
fell.

THE MASSACRE

The chiefs and their out-runners knew when
first

The soldiers stepped upon the mountain soil.
They met them and professed great friendship
for

The whites; then went their way to meet again,
And disappear, mysteriously as they
Had come. Upon their slow and tiresome way,
O'er unbridged creeks, up mountain sides, and
down

The deep ravines, the troops and wagon trains
Proceeded; keen-eyed scouts no farther sign
Of warriors saw, and all went well until



MISS JOSEPHINE MEEKER.

"His daughter, fair and young and slight,—to teach
Paposes, could they be induced to learn."—Page 59.

They reached a rapid creek, where rocky cliffs
On either side o'erhung the narrow trail,
And there the two-faced Utes rained bullets
from

The rocks above, and murdered Thornburg and
Eleven of his gallant men, and thrice
As many wounded fell.

For full three days
And nights, the suffering remnant held their
own

Against the Utes, then slightly reinforced,
Held out as long again, till Merritt and
His force came up, and then the sneaking
braves,

With many wounded, and with twenty dead,
All silently withdrew.

Advancing toward
The agency, a courier was met,—
By Father Meeker sent in search of aid—
A lucky errand, since it saved his life,
Though every step with danger was beset.
Still farther on, the soldiers found a note
Upon a bush, beside the trail,—placed there,
They later learned, by ranchmen fleeing from

The Utes; and thus it read: "Urge on the
troops!

All murdered at the agency!"

A few
Hours' march and they were standing on the
site

Where once the agency had been—for here,
The ready torch, again had done its work.
White river, hurrying down its rocky path,
And gliding through the meadows green, still
sang

Its gurgling song as merrily as if
No grief, or trouble ever was. All else
Was still. Death's quiet reigned. And there
they lay,—

The murdered, mutilated men. All slain
By painted fiends. The kind and good old
man,

His seven young assistants,—noble, brave,
The hope of parents and the joy of friends;
All slain by those they labored for,—to whom
They wrought at all times naught but good.

THE CAPTIVES

Where now
The three frail women and the little ones,

Defenceless left? In sad captivity,
Deep in the heart of Rocky Mountain wilds,
They bravely live from day to day, and know
Not but each fateful hour may be their last.
Before the fearful massacre began,
They saw strange Indians around the place,
And wondered what their coming might portend;

When soon, the fatal balls began to fly,
They hid in buildings; driven thence by smoke
And flames, they sought to reach the cover of
The brush, but wounded by a rifle ball,
The elder woman fell. Then came the Utes,
And bade them mount and go with them.

The moon

Rose full and beautiful upon the scene.
The warriors decked with feathers and with
paint,

The pack mules laden with their stolen goods,
The doubly burdened ponies, filed along
The winding Indian trail,—a cavalcade,
Grotesque and weird, and somber as the night.
When several long and weary hours had
passed

A halt was made for rest, and then the chief
His noble qualities displayed by threats

With dreadful anger filled. A loaded gun
He placed at one poor captive's head, to prove
If she would shrink, or run away. "I shall
Not run," she said: "I fear not you, nor death."
Another, treated like the first, said, "Shoot!
I care not if I die." "Brave squaw! Good
squaw!

No scare!" the great Chief Douglass said; then
laughed
And jeered at, by his braves he slunk away.

Again, they took the rugged mountain trail.
The sorrow-stricken captives could but note
How awe-inspiring in the moon's pale light
The grandeur of the scenes through which they
filed,
Like moving shadows; 'neath the tall dark
pines,
By giant rocks, o'er dizzy heights they went,
Down deep ravines, beside the foaming stream
That thundered o'er its rocky bed, and on,
To where the Utes had lately moved their
camp,
To have their squaws and children safely
placed,
In preparation for the war they planned.

Again, when passed the noon of night, they left
The trail, and made a second halt beside
An ice-cold stream, that through a canon ran,—
A canon, deep and dark, by towering peaks
Hedged in on every side, and here they found
The squaws encamped. The wounded lady,
sore

And stiffened by her ride, could not dismount;
Chief Douglass dragged her from her horse,
nor cared

That she should helpless fall. The squaws,
more kind

And gentle, made for her a blanket bed.

The women, placed in separate tents, that sad
And direful night, slept little. Morning
brought

A foaming pony in, whose rider told
Of Thornburg's battle in the pass. This news
Aroused the braves, and great excitement
reigned;

The ponies hurriedly were saddled, and
Bedecked with gaudy, savage hideousness,
The yelling warriors hastened to the front.
The captives with the squaws remained. Some
felt

A pity for the whites, and wept with them;

They petted, in their way, the little ones,
Who bravely bore the hardships as they came,
And learned to sing the weird and mournful
songs

The squaws sung 'round the captives' beds at
night.

The red men liked the "white papooses" much,
And when they learned they could not steal
them from

The mother's clinging arms, they tried to buy,
And offered ponies in exchange for them.

Squaw Susan made them moccasins to wear,
And over them she wept, because the Utes
Had made them fatherless; with kindly deeds
She often eased the captives' dreary lot.

Squaw Susan was the sister of Ouray,—

"The white man's friend,"—the head of all the
Utes;

And both, the captives learned, were "friends
indeed."

In intellect and heart, they seemed above
The others of their tribe. Ouray had lived
With whites, and spoke the Spanish language
well;

And Susan owed her life to them, and still,
The debt of gratitude, desired to pay.

Long years before, when she was young, be-
fore

The colonists had thought to settle on
The arid plains and found the busy town
For Horace Greeley named, white soldiers
saved

Her life. 'Twas then, Arapahoes, the red
Men of the plains, at war with mountain Utes,
Had bound a captured squaw, to burn her at
A tree, just north of where that town now
stands,

Not far from where the winding Poudre flows;
The brush was piled, the torch applied,—
when lo!

A band of soldiers from the Collins fort,
Scarce thirty miles away, appeared, and saved
The dusky Indian maiden from her foes,
And sent her safely to her tribe,—the Utes
Beyond the snowy range. They gave her then
The name she bore, and Susan never did
Forget.

While yet the warriors were away,
The squaws broke camp and moved still farther
on

To where the mountains framed a valley rich
In grass, that covered it luxuriantly,

And through which ran a pure and sparkling
stream.

The red men now returned by twos and threes,
And wore with pride the clothing taken from
The soldiers they had slain. They piled the
sage

Brush high, spread over it the stolen clothes,
And danced around the pile, with fearful yells,
And actions frightfully suggestive of
The ghastly deeds the hideous men might do.
At night, the Indians held a council long,
And plainly fraught with grave intent. Ouray
Had sent a messenger commanding Utes
To let the pale-faced captives go; he liked
Not that a portion of his tribe had gone
To war. He bade them cease the bloody work;
And, on the other hand, a great white chief
With many warriors, hastened towards their
camp.

A day of indecision passed, and then
The tents were taken down, the ponies packed
With camp utensils, and at fearful pace
All hastened over mountains steep, that one
Who walked could scarcely pass. With neither
food,
Or rest, or water, dragged the dreadful day,



OURAY AND CHIPETA.

"Released at last they traveled to the home
Of Chief Ouray. His wife, Chipeta, wept
For them because their lot had been so hard."—Page 77.

While blew the wind so terribly, that dust
Enveloped them as might a cloud.

The dame,

So frail at best, but wounded now, and weak,
No saddle and no bridle had, and much
She suffered on that cold and cruel ride.
Her captors little cared if she should die;
They dared not murder her, as helpless as
She was; they thought that their "Great Spirit"
loved

The "Heap good doctor woman" much, and
feared

His anger should they take her life; and yet,
They would have lost her in those wilds, to
starve,

Or fall a prey to beasts, without regret;
And knowing this, the other captives watched
Her well. At night a camping place was
reached;

The women gladly parted from their steeds,
And sank exhausted on the ground.

Beside

Grand River they were camped for several
days.

The Indians from the mountains high, each
day

The soldiers watched with glasses looking far.
With foaming steeds the runners often came,
At last, with news that troops were drawing
near.

This word in camp a fearful panic made;—
A riot wild; the warriors ran this way
And that; Chief Johnson, maddened at the
sense

Of danger near, his anger vent upon
His youngest squaw, who screamed with fright
and pain,

As fell the brutal lash. The ponies felt
The tumult in the air, and snorted, reared,
And ran, until it seemed as if they could
Not be subdued; but caught at last, the tents
Were taken down, the burden-bearing beasts
Were loaded once again; the camp was moved
Still farther south, and on, and on, and on,
For three days more.

The rain began to fall,
And every day the women and the babes
Were drenched with it. The Utes could not
retreat

Much farther; they were near the limit of
Their reservation,—near the snowy range.
Again they camped, and here remained until

The soldiers came,—till General Adams came
To take the captives home. The red men spent
The time in camp hilariously; they danced
And sang. The “white papooses” joined with
 them

Right gleefully. The little ones soon learned
To imitate their dances and to sing
Their droning songs. Their savage captors
 watched

Them with delight, and more than ever, wished
To purchase them.

 At times the fleeing Utes—
Made homeless by their own misdeeds,—de-
 clared

The blame was all the Agent’s, who they said,
Would make them work, and would not do
 as he

Was told by them. Chief Douglass sadly
 shook his head,

And said, “Me heap poor man!”

 A conference
Had been agreed upon, at last, between
The soldiers and the warring tribe. The sky
Was tinted with the sunset’s brilliant glow
When braves appeared and told their prisoners,

“To-morrow, five white men will come, and
one,
A heap big man of peace.” The captives
heard
The news with joy. The morning brought the
friends
They could not greet with words. so great was
their
Emotion. Hardship, insult, ridicule
And peril, they had borne without a tear,
But kindly faces looking into theirs,
The clasp of friendly hands, could not be seen
And felt, unmoved.

Ouray gave orders that
The captives should be treated well and be
Allowed to go. A stormy council then
Ensued. A portion of the Utes desired
To hold the prisoners between themselves
And justice until peace should be declared—
And others wished them freed.

The speeches grew
In length and violence, when Susan burst
Into the council lodge, in gorgeous wrap
Arrayed,—a robe of finest skin of deer,—
With beads and fringes trimmed,—demanding
that

The captives should be freed; she told their
tale

Of suffering and woe, and pled their cause
So well, that speedily she won it. Three
And twenty days the Utes their captives held.
Released at last, they traveled to the home
Of Chief Ouray. His wife, Chipeta, wept
For them, because their lot had been so hard,
And shared with them the comforts of her
home.

The fleet, sure-footed horses,—mountain
reared—

Between them and their captors, day by day,
A long and welcome space stretched out, until
Tall ranges loomed between them and the land
Of their captivity and woe,—until
The swifter horse of steam was reached that
sped

Them to their friends.

Words fail to paint the joy,
The grief of that home-coming. Welcomes
filled

The air, the tears and smiles all faces showed.
The flags at half-mast hung; in mourning
draped

Was all the town. The people like one great
And loving family bereaved, did mourn.

PRAIRIE ROVERS

As winter days draw near, the dwellers in
The lonely prairie home see phases of
The life upon the plains, still new to them.
Upon the unclaimed land, that stretches far,
A herder, with his dog and pony, comes
To watch his white-fleeced flock the while they
graze

Upon the prairie's dried nutritious grass,
Named for the buffalo it nourished in
The years gone by, when they,—the monarchs
of

The plains,—in countless numbers roamed
these wastes.

The coyote skulks from knoll to knoll in search
Of prey, his hunger to appease, and with
His many-keyed, blood-curdling howls and
yelps,

Awakes uncanny echoes in the night.

His larger, but less noisy relative—

The wolf—comes not so near the haunts of
men,

But out upon the plains, in greedy packs,
Surround the smaller herds, and animals
Are harassed, till they can endure no more,
And fall, their victims. Rabbits bound away
With startling swiftness, when a passer-by
Draws near their sheltering tuft of grass. Wild
geese

And ducks between the river and the fields
Where grain has grown, make frequent jour-
neyings.

The buzzard, and the hawk, dark birds of
prey—

Oft circle 'round; but no sweet song birds
come;

The treeless, vineless prairie offers them
No sheltered and alluring nesting place.

THE BRONCO BREAKERS

Across the country, cowboys with a band
Of cattle come, with outfit all complete
For them to live upon the plains for weeks.
To keep the riders well supplied with steeds,
Both fresh and active, extra horses with
Them travel. Passing through the settlement,
Where many objects block their way, they ride
The horses broken to the work. But once

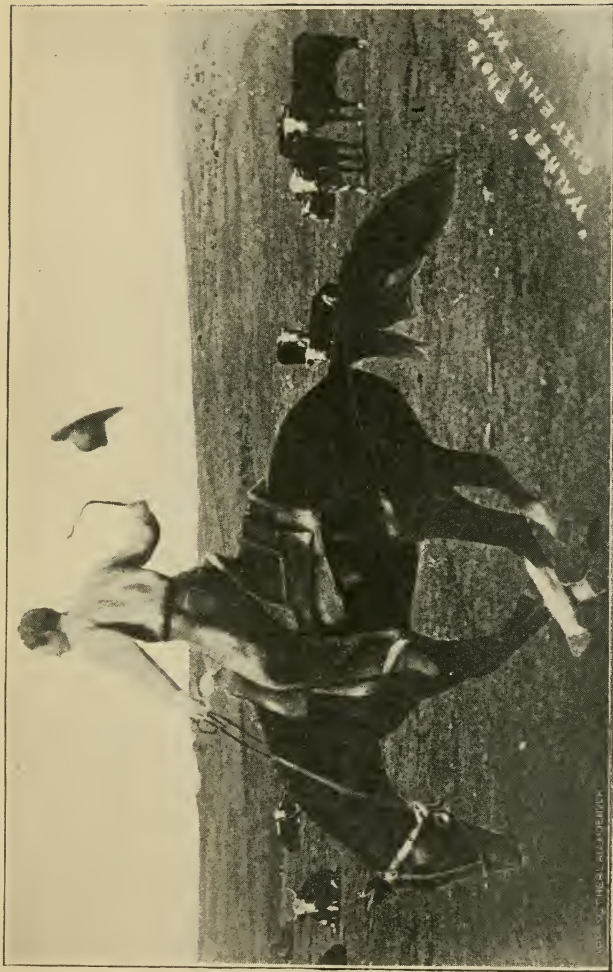
Outside the fence, where no obstructions are,
The untamed broncos are compelled to yield
Subjection to the master's bit and spur.

With piercing shouts from riders, ponies crowd
The weary cattle through the open gate,
And reach a point where all may take a rest.
The men and beasts seek comfort, each in his
Own way. The hungry herd spread out to
crop

The sweet dry grass, or lie them down to sleep.
The cook, his prairie schooner, filled with food
Supplies and blankets, draws aside, and lights
A fire and soon prepares a smoking meal.

Refreshed and rested, all are ready for
The start. A theater the boundless plains
Become at once, where reckless riders show
Their daring skill. The cowboys, mounted on
Their well-trained steeds, each singles from
the herd

The bronco he intends to break. A dash,
A leap, away, across the plains they go,—
Pursuer and pursued. Above his head
The rider swings his lariat, as on
They fly. His knowing pony understands



A BUCKING BRONCO.

"A theater, the boundless plains
Become at once, where reckless riders show
Their daring skill."—Page 80.

The part that it must act, as fully as
The horseman knows his own. The fleeing
horse,

Unburdened, makes a picture full of strength
And spirit, and of beauty, as it speeds
Courageously, with nervous, reckless haste.

The other, in reserve his fleetness holds,
And heads the fleer off at every turn.

The moment that the rider nears his prize,
The circling, buzzing rope, with angry hiss
And whir, cuts swiftly through the air, and
lands

Its choking slip-noose 'round the bronco's neck.

The pony, at that instant turns, and plants
His four feet firmly on the ground, and holds

Them there, with rope attached to saddle horn,
Until the frightened, well nigh strangled beast,

Decides to quit its rearing, plunging fight,

And go wherever it is led. And now,

The troubles of the untamed horse have but

Begun. The rider's weight upon its back,

The bit, the saddle, it must learn to know.

The trembling bronco stands with blinded eyes,

And fettered feet, or throws itself upon

The ground, while men adjust the binding
straps.

The rider springs into the saddle seat ;
The blinds and fetters off, across the plains
The frantic bronco tears and plunges, rears
And jumps, with legs held straight and stiff,
in vain

Attempts to throw the fearless man, who sits
As firm and easily as if he were
A portion of the animal. Each man
Subdues his horse with little difference
Of skill and strength. The captor ponies now
Enjoy a well-earned rest, to travel with
The band turned loose. The broncos, yield-
ing to

Their riders' will, at last, are made to urge
The quadrupeds upon their way, and soon,
A cloud of dust declares the exit of
The various actors from the mammoth stage.

WILD HORSES

Large bands of horses no one owns, run wild
Upon the plains, and men inured to toil
And danger, often try to capture them.
The horse is not a native of this land.
The Spaniards knew his worth and brought
him here.

These unclaimed herds must be the progeny
Of animals that one day knew the care
Of man, perhaps escaped, when savages
Their owners massacred, or from them strayed,
When they defied the perils of the plains
In seeking California's new-found gold.

Along the dusty trail, a little band
Of men and horses come, and slowly near
The gate. The riders pause to quench their
thirst

Where Roland's well a cooling draft supplies.
The horses that the watchful men surround,
Are captives,—weary and dispirited,—
That but a few short days ago, arched their
Proud necks, and fleet of foot, with flowing
manes

And tails, as swiftly as the wind across
The prairies sped, untrammelled by the will
Of man. One hardy, skillful horseman, broad
Of chest, and bronzed by wind and sun, who
knows

So thoroughly the almost trackless plains,
And reads so well the guidance of the stars
He has no fear of being lost by day

Or night, has hunted these wild creatures
years,
And studied them until he knows full well
Their habits and their haunts. The captor of
A thousand head and more, the settlers far
And near, know "Wild Horse Jerry." Resting
now,
With questions plied, he tells the story of
His novel work, in substance given here.

WILD HORSE JERRY'S STORY

All over this unsettled country, bands
Of wild and unowned horses roam, each band
Protected and controlled by one strong male.
This stallion will allow no rival near,
And weaker males are often found alone,
Upon the plains. Terrific fights sometimes
Ensue, when two aspire to leadership.
I followed once, for forty hours or more,
A band that was becoming very tired;
We chanced to pass upon the plains, one of
These lone and beaten males. He seemed at
once
To know his hated rival's strength was gone,
And saw his chance to take the band from him.

They fought for mastery for more than half
A day, and reared, and struck, and bit, and fell
Upon their knees and wrestled terribly,
Until the lonely horse the leadership
Assumed,—made victor by his greater
strength.

The man who captures these wild animals
Must test his patience and endurance well.
When I discover where they range, I make
My camp as near them as I can and still
Be near a good supply of water; then,
I place my men and extra horses there—
In camp—and ride out toward the wary band.
You know all horses cling to their old range,
And will not leave it unless driven off,
And then, when free, return. This instinct,—
when

I only follow them enough to keep
Them moving,—causes them to circle some,
And makes it quite an easy thing for me
To have a new fresh horse from camp when
mine

Is tired. Wild horses are intelligent,
And harder to surprise than antelope.
They see me when a mile away, and stand

And watch me for awhile, and when they learn
That I am nearing them, they run to some
Far hill and watch again. When they decide
That they are followed, then, the work begins.
They then will start and run for twenty miles,
Or more. I do not try to follow near
To them, but ride the way they went until
They notice me, and run again, and so
Allow them little time to eat, or sleep.
I always let them drink; they then become
More gentle and less active, too. I do
Not try to crowd them day and night, but try
To get them used to seeing me. A day
Or two, I work like this, and then ride near
To them, and in a measure can direct
Their course. The yearlings tire out first and
want
To stop. One time, a leader tried to drive
Me back; as he came near to me I threw
Some rocks and hit him just behind the ear;
I felled him several times; at last, he kept
Away, but still showed fight. Three days and
nights
I've followed these wild creatures, without
sleep,
Excepting, that I dozed a little as

I rode. The horses were so weary that
They could not travel fast, or far; I drove
Them very carefully into a strong
Corral, so made, that it did not betray
It was a trap for them. If I had urged
Them then, they would have scattered, and my
work

Would all have been in vain. The largest herd
I ever caught, was thirty. Men have stunned
And captured animals they coveted,
By "creasing" them; they wound with rifle ball
A certain cord upon the horse's neck,
Which causes him to fall unconscious; then,
They bind their prize, and hold him prisoner,
And while they cure the wound, they tame the
horse.

It often happens that the bullet strikes
A vital point, an inch below the mark,
And then the noble creature murdered falls,—
A victim of man's cruelty and greed.

THE BLIZZARD

Mid-winter's days, with skies of cloudless blue,
And sun of dazzling brightness, come and go,
With little hint of storm, or bitter cold,

While Boreas allows the milder winds
To sweep the plains. Vast herds of cattle feed
Upon the prairie grass, and scattered far,
They crop the hay-like spears, that August's
heat,
And lack of moisture, cured to meet their
wants.

Some stagnant pool supplies the water they
Must drink, unless, they happily may range
In some fair valley, that a flowing stream
Makes glad. Unsheltered, and forlorn at best,
Who can portray the suffering of those poor
Dumb beasts when comes the cruel, numbing
cold,—

Fierce offspring of dark clouds that ride upon
The stinging blast, and cutting, blinding
sleet,—

The fearful blizzard, reigning in its wrath?
Before its terrors, man, unsheltered, soon
Would cease to fight for life. Not often, but
Unheralded and unexpected, come
These dreaded storms. The prairie dwellers
see

The warm, bright, spring-like morn, in one
short hour,
Give place to warring elements surcharged



PUBLIC SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

"The prairie town, long since a city named,
Displays with pride its churches and its schools."--Page 103.

With Arctic cold. With hurrying steps the
men

Protect the animals belonging to
The place, and snugly house and feed in barns,
That look like long, low stacks, so deeply are
Their frames with straw and hay o'er spread.
Despite

Their care, the weaklings of the herd succumb,
And morning finds them stiff and cold. The
gloom

Upon the world without, makes greater seem
The comforts of the lonely prairie home,
Where warmth and cheer await the wanderer.
The fires well piled with coal the prairie mines
Afford, send forth unwonted, welcome glow.
The stormy darkness early settles down,
And adds long hours to the bitter night.
The light of lanterns shining through the
gloom,

The footsteps creaking in the snow, announce
The coming of the busy men, whose work
Of being merciful to beasts is for
The moment o'er. Their beards, icicled, show
The rigors of the night. The shed-like room
Which held the ranchman's homestead claim,
before

A house was joined to it, receives a shower
Of snow from stamping feet and shaken
coats,—

While joke and laughter show how sturdily
A man can buffet storms when waits for him
The joy and comfort of a home. Served hot
And steaming, is the evening meal.
Refreshed and rested, 'round the fire they sit
Comparing incidents of Western life.

The table cleared, with anxious thought of
one,—

A lonely horseman, whom at early morn
She saw pass through the gate, and out upon
The almost houseless plains, the mother puts
Her lamp upon the window seat, where it
May feebly show against the storm, that here
A habitation stands. The children nod
Their sleepy heads, and soon are tucked away
In slumber sweet. Her needle, Margaret
Employs, while listening to the stories new
And full of interest to one, who like
Herself must learn to live and make a home
Amid conditions never met before.

A stranger shares her hospitality
This night;—a mountaineer, who luckily

Arrived a little earlier than the storm,
With load of cedar poles he cut on some
Steep mountain side full forty miles away,
To fill her husband's order. Pleased to find
An interested audience, he tells
In quaint, terse terms, of times before the
 plains
Were crossed by coaches drawn by steam, when
 he,
A freighter, and a guide to emigrants,
Drove dull, slow oxen, weary days across
The barren wilds. But little questioning
It needs to start his oft-told tales. One asks
About the buffalo, that roamed the plains
In vast uncounted herds, a few short years
Before, ere they were slaughtered solely for
Their shaggy coats.

 "Many's the time I've stopped
My team to let a herd of buffalo
Go past," the freighter said. "They won't turn
 off
Their path to trouble ye; ye never saw
No better critters 'bout that thing,—but if
Ye're in their way, they'll run right over ye.
They allus run with heads to ground, ye
 know,—

Don't seem to see ye're there. One time when I
Was going with a train to 'Frisco, all
They did was jest to smash a feller's team;
I told the eejit that he'd better wait;
No! He was mad because we stopped the train
To let them pass; so he turned off the trail
And started on, a grumblin' to hisself,
'Won't get nowhere, a stoppin' all the time!'
'Wall! What's ten minutes when we've got a
road

A thousand miles to go,' sez I, 'and all
The summer time ahead of ye? Ye'd best
Jest wait a bit! Them buffalo has ben
Hard chased by Indjins! Don't you see they're
cross?'

It want no use to talk to sich a fool;
He kept right on, and they ran over him;
We saw him hoppin' 'round amongst the
herd,—

They hustled him about and carried him
A rod or more; he lost all but one ox;
The wonder was that he got out alive
Hisself. His blankets was stove full of holes;
Two sacks of flour was tracked about the plains.
Suthin' to eat? He had a little cash,
And bought his grub of some ' the rest of us,

And one man took his ox, and carted him
The rest' the way for it.

Seen Indjins?

Piles

Of 'em. They'd beg and steal of us while we
Was going through their territory. Squaws
Would beg for biscuit; allus seemed to think
A sight o' biscuit; used to beg and say,
'Papoose heap sick.' One day we got cor-
ralled

By 'em; them Indjins was as thick as weeds.
Their braves was on the warpath and they had
The guns with them. The women, children,
and old men

They left behind was most a starved to death;
They begged us hard to kill a buffalo
For them to eat; one feller took his gun,—
It was a long range rifle,—and he soon
Brought down a buffalo; you should have seen
Them Indjins eat; by morning 'twas all gone,
And they stood 'round a sucking at the bones.

Asthmy? I never seed a soul but what
Got help for that a comin' here; but folks
That has consumption—is most gone—it kills
To come here in the cars; I knowed they used

To cure afore the cars was here, but now,
They gets into this altitude too quick.
One time I took a woman 'cross the plains
That was so nigh used up we had to lift
Her in and out the wagon, take her to
The houses nights, jest like a baby, long
As houses could be found, but 'fore we got
Half way to 'Frisco, she would make her brags
That she could walk as far as we could drive
Our oxen in a day,—and she could do
It, too.

What did we burn to cook our meals?
Why! buffalo chips. I used to take a sack
And go way out along the trail, and fill
It 'gainst the time we'd camp; I used to dig
A hole and make my fire in it and set
My kettles in the hole; I kivered 'em
With iron lids and made a fire on the lids
And heat 'em top and bottom too; and that's
The way I baked my bread, and meat and
beans.

Of course we baked, when we was camped o'
nights;

We boiled and fried at any camping place.
Most creeks has wood a growin' on the banks,
And nat'rully we burned it when we camped

Near by,—but creeks want allus near our camp
To give us wood nor water, so we took
A cask of water and some kindlin' right
Along with us.

Ye see, folks hadn't dug
No wells nor mines for us, tho' prairie dogs
Has allus ben prospectin' for the coal
And bringin' little chunks of it above
The ground sometimes, to scatter 'round their
holes
And show folks coal is there."

Around the house
The cold wind shrieks, as if in anger that
It cannot enter and control the warm
And cosy room, and drive its genial, but
Unconquered foe therefrom. The talkative
Old plainsman shakes the ashes from his
pipe,—
An act that breaks the circle 'round the fire.
A good-night journey to the snow-banked
barns
Assures their owner that his animals
Are snug as he can make them in the storm.

Unbroken sleep the household cannot know
This dismal night, for loud above the wind,

As wears the night away, there comes the
sound

Of ceaseless footfalls, creaking in the snow,
As countless suff'ring cattle march in ranks,—
A bovine army,—lowing, bellowing,
With hunger, weariness and cold.

Before

The icy blast, that drives them on and on,
They come from their old feeding ground until
The straggling, scattered numbers grow into
A solid column, stretching far. The light
Of morning shows them marching, marching
still;

Still lowing, bellowing, and tramping on
And on, with heads held low, and swaying
forms,—

A moving mass of horns and furry backs,—
A moving mass of misery and pain.
The river reached, in their despair, some plunge
Into its icy depths to die perhaps,
Perhaps to cross to isles, or farther bank;
Some shrinking from its iciness, pursue
Its winding way a while, then turn to join
The multitude,—wind driven—and to swell
Their numbers as they pass again adown



CHASING A STEER.

"The rope,
Well thrown, soon stops a creature's flight."—*Page 102.*

The prairie fence and near the house where
they
Who see and know their wretchedness, cannot
Abate it in the least. And so they tramp,
And march, and bellow, till the storm winds
cease.

An hour or two before night's shadows fall,—
The fury of the storm has lessened,—comes
A horse and rider to the door,—the two
Who passed the gate ere yet the storm began.
Rejoiced to see the stranger safe, both man
And beast are given food and shelter; while
He breaks his long cold fast, the rider tells
How having placed two blankets underneath
His saddle it was possible for him
To wrap himself in one, or else he must
Have frozen ere he reached the empty shack
Upon the "Seven Cross" cattle ranch, which
men

Inhabit now and then, and leave with door
Unlocked, and oftentimes with food supplies,—
A common custom on the Western plains,—
To make a stopping place for cattlemen,
Or cowboys hunting "mavericks" or "strays,"
Or else to meet the wants of men in straits

Like his. No food was there, but thankful for
A fire, he took his faithful steed inside
The shack, fed him the scanty provender
He found, and waited for the night to pass.

At last, the fury of the storm is spent ;
The cheering sun dispels the bitter cold ;
Communication opens with the world ;
A messenger to town, returns with mail,—
With letters long delayed, and papers more
Than welcome since the storm imprisonment.
Word also comes of how the people fared ;
Of men confused and blinded by the storm,
Who lost their way when near the homes they
sought ;
Of little children on their way from school,—
Who said their prayers and laid them down to
sleep
Till morning light should show their homes
to them,—
Found by the people seeking them, and saved
As by a miracle.

The sunlight falls
Upon the whitened surface of the plains
With blinding brightness. All around the poor
Dumb cattle starving stand. Unlike the horse,

Who paws the snow aside to find the grass
Beneath,—they know no way to reach the food
They need. In many places through the fence
They break, and feed upon the farmers' stacks,
Or roam the village streets,—a menace to
Unmounted men,—until the cowboys come
And with their wiry ponies drive them back
Among the sheltering bluffs from whence they
came.

THE ROUND-UP

The lovely days of spring have clothed the
plains
With fresh, sweet grass, and spread a welcome
feast
Before the wandering herds. The cattlemen
Prepare to "round" their creatures "up," and
learn
The loss or profit of the year. For weeks,
The country to be traversed, and the place
To meet each day with gathered herds, has
been
Decided on, and advertised, that all
The owners with their men may gather where

Their cattle range, and do their share of
work,—

And claim and brand their property. One
man,—

A chosen Captain,—plans and orders all.

From every side they come with ponies fleet
Of foot, and trained to hold the struggling
beasts

When rider's ropes have checked their utmost
flight;

With cowboys skilled in throwing lariats,

And reading brands obscure, or tampered with;

With men to cook, and drive the wagons filled

With blankets and with food supplies to each

Day's camping place; with irons that shall
brand

The owner's undisputed claim upon

The luckless calf. Prepared to live upon

The plains for weeks,—to sleep upon the
ground

In blankets wrapped, these hardy plainsmen go

Far to the eastern limit of the range

Their cattle feed upon, and "round them up"

By sending riders on a circuit wide,

To gather every animal that shows

A brand belonging to the men for whom

They work. A camping place is chosen where
They wish to have the first day's round-up
brought,
And there the cook is found, prepared to feed
The hungry men.

The first red streak of dawn
Is signal for the start, and silently
The horsemen vanish on their tiring quest,
Each, with his ground to cover, pointed out.
The river flows upon the south,—some search
Its banks; another party follow up
A tributary stream, and others scour
The distant bluffs, and all the land between.
Well past the hour of noon, the cowboys with
The herd appear, and men detailed for their
Relief, ride out to guard the band, while they
Who gathered them, refresh the inner man.

Again, a mammoth stage, and actors skilled.
Around a smouldering fire a group of men
Are heating irons, each of which shall sear
Upon the owner's living property,
Its quaint device. The mounted cowboys,
spurred,
With lariats in hand, dash in among
The herd, and singling out the animals

They want,—give chase. The race is short.
The rope,
Well thrown, soon stops a creature's flight.
Half dragged,
Half running, it is quickly taken where
The branders wait to do their work. Each man
Keeps tally of the calves he brands, and so
The census of the bovine family
That roams the plains, is taken. Animals
No longer wanted, are turned back upon
The range from whence they came; those held
as beeves,
Or held to drive upon some other range,
Must be well guarded, day and night, and men
Take turns at that. With little change the
work
Goes on from day to day. Each camping
place
Is chosen for the chance it furnishes
Of water for the men and animals
And well for them if it may be a clear
And flowing stream. This hard exciting life
Is lived, until the prairies have been scoured
From Julesburg to the mountain towns, and
well

Across Wyoming's line. Disbanded then,
The round-up waits another call.

IN LATER TIMES

The years,
Each coming with its joys and sorrows filled,
Each leaving evidence of human skill
And workmanship, have wrought vast changes

on

The desert land, since first the little band
Of pioneers essayed to colonize,
And rear upon a platform sacred to
High moral purposes and temperance,
The homes wherein their children might imbibe
The principles they most desired for them.

Adown a lovely valley, wonderful
For its fertility, and reclaimed from
Arid land by generous giving of its stream,
The weakened Poudre flows. The well-tilled
farms,

With cosy homes supplied with every need,
With fields upholding crops luxuriant
And promising, present a pleasing scene.

The prairie town, long since a city named,
Displays with pride its churches and its schools,

Its fair and happy homes, its well laid streets,
Its merchants blocks, unmarred by foul saloons.

From a slight eminence there smiles upon
The tree-embowered homes, those stately halls
Of learning, which receive the youth from far
And near, and send them forth to graft upon
The budding mind, their teaching and their
thought.

The house, commodious and well preserved,
That "Father Meeker" built in early days,
Still stands, a tribute to his confidence
In all the glowing prophecies he made
Concerning Greeley's future destiny.
The little trees he planted, shade it well;
The mountain firs, now tall and stately, stand
Like sentinels around this home where dwells
The aged widow, who despite her wound
And weakness, has survived the horrors of
The massacre and dread captivity,—
Survived the daughter who with her endured
So bravely, hardship, agony and grief.

The wild rich country which the Utes had held,
Was taken from them when they massacred
So mercilessly friends, to them so true.



MRS. ARVILLA D. MEEKER.

"The mountain firs, now tall and stately, stand
Like sentinels around this home where dwells
The aged widow."—*Page 104.*

The sacrifice the Agent felt must be
Before the Utes would go,—would leave their
land

For whites to file upon, was not alone
For him; seven brave young lives with his,
went out;

This was the cruel sacrifice which sent
The Utes still farther west, and opened up
The mountain country's vast and untold wealth
To Colorado.

Shimmering lakes now dot
The land; the artificial lakes that man
Has made; the needed reservoirs to aid
In irrigation schemes.

Across the plains,
Connecting house with house, are stretched the
wires

Æolus loves to play upon, the wires
Annihilating loneliness and space
By bringing spoken messages from far.

What once was "range" the settlers cultivate,
And wild uncared-for herds are driven back
To ranges people have not limited.

Beyond the "fence" which long ago gave up
Its proud distinction,—homes are reared, and
one

May read prosperity's ascending steps
On many a well tilled farm, by noting how
The habitations, primitive and small,
Gave place to dwellings more commodious;—
The dugout of the bachelor, the cot
To which he brought his bride, and the fine
house
Which marks their greater means and need of
room.

Around the home are trees, and flowers, and
vines,
And finding covert to their taste, the birds
Have come,—the dear sweet song birds that we
love.

The woodbine-covered porch, song sparrows
nest
Upon; the robin and woodpecker feast
Where hang its purple berries, and the trees
Entice full many a welcome songster to
Their shade, that dearly loves to bathe and
preen

Where flows the sparkling, grass-edged current at
Their roots.

The scene one looks upon to-day,
Is not the old monotony of land
And sky. The signs of labor and of thrift
Are everywhere, and stretching far beneath
The eye, the plains like one vast chessboard
seem,—
Its squares marked off by differing shades of
green,
Or golden blocks, where rank sunflowers tint
The view.

The pioneers who bore the toil
And hardships of those early days, know,—
more
Than he who later comes,—the worth of all
They now enjoy. They love to meet and talk
The old times o'er, while ringing laughter tells
How clearly now they see the comic side
To much that then occurred,—full thirty years
Ago. The grandeur of the mountains and
The plains grows on beholders day by day,—
The beauty of these "lifted lands." The joy
Of Colorado's health-reviving air,

Her azure skies, her cheerful days, her cool
And restful nights, the full and varied yield
She harvests from her irrigated lands,
Her merry children, and her firesides dear,
Cause many a glad and thankful heart to say
With pride and full contentment, "THIS IS
HOME."

THE YUCCA.

Like armored sentinel the Yucca stands,
As if to guard its sun-burned, dreary lands.

Its leaves, like bayonets, unyielding rise,
'Neath Winter's cold, and Summer's scorching
 skies.

It falters not for lack of dew or rain,
But loves the rugged bluff, the wind-swept
 plain.

Alone, or grouped, where e'er is cast its lot,
Unsocial, grim, and stern, it guards the spot.

Beneath its bristling armor hides away,—
Like noble warrior, ruled by Duty's sway,—

A heart of tender beauty. When comes June,
With youth, and love, and gladness all in tune,

The Yucca's bells, abundant, creamy, fair,
Unfold, and fling their fragrance on the air.

PRAIRIE DOG TOWN.

Out on the prairies so boundless and wide,
This way, or that way, or which way we ride,
Come we to settlements lying around,
Where many settlers together are found
In their snug houses, deep under the ground,
Every house guarded about by a mound.

Lively, and chirping, and frisky and brown,—
Come see the settlers of Prairie Dog Town;
Dark are their homes where they hide, when
 they may,—
Dearly they love the warm light of the day;
Out in the sunshine they visit and play;
Hither and thither to neighbors they stray.

Deep are their holes, "Down to water," 't is
 said,—
Out from the nearest one pops a brown head;
See him stand up like an image and wait,—
Maybe he listens for one who is late,
Maybe he lingers to welcome his mate,—
Some pretty Prairie Dog "Down by the gate."

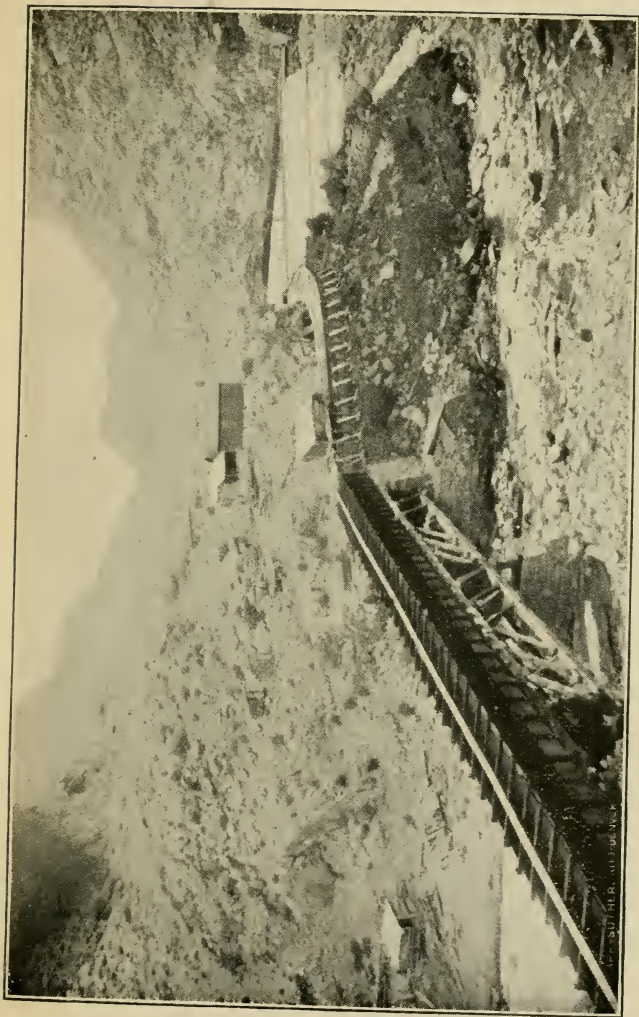
Living in colonies all of their days,
Social, and pretty, and cute are their ways,—
Out of his hole like a clumsy old clown,
Shaking his tail, with a chirp he is down;
Lively and chirping, and frisky and brown,—
These are the settlers of Prairie Dog Town.

THE MOUNTAIN STREAM

The stream down rocky canyons leaps,
And in its channel onward sweeps,
Till held and barred, it turns its way,
Where man's own power and skill may say,
And unto gardens, farms and fields,
The treasure of its own self yields.

And now it sings through countless ditches;
Upspring bright flowers, like winsome witches,
And nod at their own mirrored ranks,
Reflected from the verdant banks;
Its busy way, where e'er it goes,
The gladdened face of nature shows.

Like hosts drawn up in war's array,
The cacti long had held the way;
Their thorns like bayonets pierced the air,
Till water came and conquered there,
And changed the desert, lone and drear,
To homes and gardens, full of cheer.



DIVERTING THE WATER FROM THE NORTH POUUDRE.

"Till held and barred, it turns its way,
Where man's own skill and power may say."—Page 112.

A MAY-TIME PICTURE.

From cushions of crimson the sun arose, beam-
ing

With gladness and light on the beautiful
earth;

She waved her green banners all daintily
gleaming

With the buds and the flowers to which May-
time gives birth.

The snow-covered peaks of the mountains re-
flected

The rainbow-hued tints which the sunlight
found there,

And into the picture a beauty projected,

As bright and as grand as the morning was
fair.

Oh, beautiful May-time! Oh, crimson-hued
morning!

What poet, or painter, can pencil thy
charms?

The earth like a maiden for bridal adorning,

The sun like the lover who woe to his arms.

The flower-dotted prairie, the glimmering
 river,
 The deep azure sky and the sun's golden
 light,
The lovely green trees with their leaves all
 a-quiver,
 And the glittering mountains, so stately and
 white.

But over the brightness a shadow is stealing;
 The tops of the mountains are hidden in haze
And soon o'er the valley, like chariots wheeling,
 The wind-wafted storm-clouds obscure the
 sun's rays.

We sigh that the beauty and gladness are fading;
 ing;

 We count not the blessings the shadows may
 bear;

Forget that the Power directing the shading,
 May hold for our winning the crown victors
 wear.

Still dark grow the heavens, and low clouds
 hang o'er us;

 When lo, what a happy unlooked-for surprise!

All, all of the beauties of May-time before us,
Receive new enchantment, direct from the
skies.

For out of the gloom and the somberness
sailing,

As hopes, pure and bright, from our sorrows
are born,

To drape the fair earth with a soft bridal
veiling,

The white, fleecy snow-flakes, the picture
adorn.

Upon the green branches, so gracefully cluster-
ing,

So lovingly kissed the velvety grass;

And now to the banks of the river-bed muster-
ing,

And throwing bright gleams to the waters
that pass;

As pure as the flowers whose leaves they are
hiding,

As fair as the loveliest blossoms of May,

So frail in their beauty, and never abiding,

How soon like the mists, they will vanish
away.

The cloud passes by, and the sun's thrilling
kisses,

Descend to the gladdened and jubilant earth,
And whispers of beauty, contentment and
blisses,

Are caught in the winged warbler's singing
and mirth.

Oh, beautiful May-time, and beautiful morn-
ing,—

The morn of the day, and the morn of the
year,—

How full and complete in their lovely adorn-
ing,

The lights and the shadows have made thee
appear.

*SONGS FOR THE MONTHS.**JANUARY*

January, cold and bright,
Comes with smiles to view us ;
As the old year fades from sight,
With a radiant, hopeful light,
Brings the new year to us.

Sigh we for the seasons gone ?
Better ones may meet us ;
Hopes the brightest, lead us on,
And some blessed, happy morn,
Glad fruition greet us.

FEBRUARY

February, keen and cold ;
Sun of dazzling brightness ;
Naked prairies, brown and old,
Towering mountain peaks that hold
High their frigid whiteness.

February's lovely skies,
Blue as those of summer ;
Where the chatty blackbird flies,
And the jay's discordant cries,
Greet the strolling comer.

MARCH

March, a merry, boisterous chap,
'Round the corners whistling;
Tries the window with a rap,
Makes the schoolboy chase his cap,
Sets the straw stack bristling;

Fills the air with whirling snow,
Sends the sleet storm, stinging;
Scatters clouds that hover low,
Wakes the meadow lark, and so
Fills the air with singing.

APRIL

April is a fickle maid,
Full of light coquetting;
O'er her face she draws a shade,
And with tears her part is played,
Merriment forgetting.

Now she casts her clouds aside,
Beaming bright with blisses;
Smiles she has no wish to hide,
Waken lilies far and wide,
As their lips she kisses.

M A Y

May, a blithesome, bonnie lass,
With a rare completeness,
Dots with flowers the springing grass,
Bids the orchard's petaled mass,
Fill the air with sweetness.

Spreads a feast for lowing herds;
Waves the green leaf banners;
Till her morning choir of birds,
Sing their anthems without words,
With their gayest manners.

J U N E

June, a fairy maiden, sings
Over hill and valley;
Wealth of flowers bright, she brings,
And the sweetest, dearest things,
All around her rally.

Yucca's creamy, drooping bells,
Deck the wand she carries;
Tinted fields, and honeyed cells,—
Rippling streams, and shaded dells,—
There, she laughing, tarries.

JULY

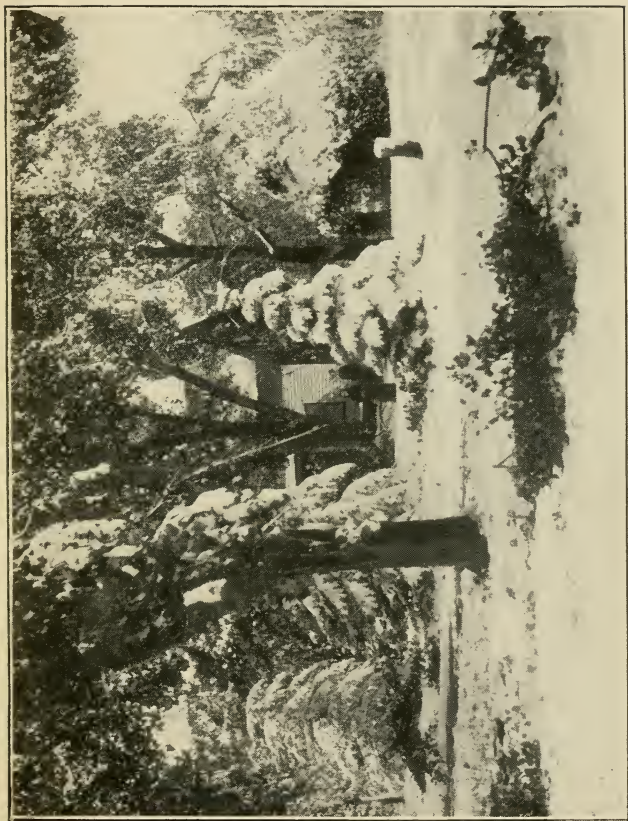
Elder sister fair, of June;
More sedate, less charming;
Changing all her merry tune
To a droning, soothing croon,
Life and laughter calming.

Floral beauties, here and there,
Ragged grown, and seedy;
Brilliant new ones everywhere,—
Flowers that bloom in gardens fair,
Gracing acres weedy.

AUGUST

Burning skies and scorching sands,
Mountain peaks, snow-whitened;
And the arid, desert lands,
By the faithful work of hands,
Marvelously brightened.

Wondrous prairies, bounty crowned,
By the generous river;
Purpling, whitening fields abound,—
Lights and shadows, all around, —
Colors all a-quiver.



SNOW SCENE IN MAY.

"To drape the fair earth with a soft bridal veiling
The white, fleecy snow-flakes the picture adorn."—*Page 115.*

SEPTEMBER

Roadside edged with purple bloom,
Brown-eyed sunflowers nod there,
And the weed-grown thicket's gloom,
Brightened by the feathery plume,
Of the golden rod there.

Curving to the breeze that steals,—
Like a purple ocean,—
Once again alfalfa yields
Wealth of honeyed fragrance,—fields
Full of billowy motion.

OCTOBER

Hamlet like, on every side,
Stacks immense, are clustered;
Stubble stretching far and wide,
Whence the beauty, wealth and pride,
Ruthlessly was mustered.

From the wintry peaks of snow,
Falls the frost breath freezing;
Early, summer's treasures go,
With their beauty and their glow,
And their power of pleasing.

N O V E M B E R

Foliage falling brown and sere,
Indian summer weather
Crowns the waning of the year;
In the sunshine, warm and clear,
All things joy together.

Feathered gleaners homeward fly
To their winter quarters;
Blue crows to the village hie;
Blackbirds flit, and chirp, and cry,
By the flowing waters.

D E C E M B E R

O'er the prairies sparkling bright,
With their frost adornings,
Flashing from the mountains white,
Full of rainbow-tinted light,
Break December mornings.

Land of color! Sunny skies!
Depth of blue, unclouded;
Checkered plains, and rocks that rise,
Tinted bright with varied dyes,—
Sleeping, snow-enshrouded.

LONG'S PEAK

Grand, mighty monument of ages past,
Where Nature stores her treasures manifold.—

Her wonders, undividable, untold.—
How beautiful, mysterious and vast,
The mold in which thy massive form is cast.
With Earth's foundation, thou wast formed
of old.

A towering giant, firm, and strong and bold,
Unchangeable, and silent to the last.

A land-mark is thy glistening head, snow-
crowned.

Held upward to the blue, o'er reaching sky;
The sweetest flowers upon thy bosom lie;
With vines and rocks thy steadfast breast is
bound;

With forest trees, thy waist is girded 'round.
And streamlets grow to torrents rushing by.

A SUNSET SCENE.

The mountains stretch along the western sky,
A scalloped cloud, a bank of darkest blue;
Their peaks have hid the setting sun from
view;

Upon the earth, the lengthened shadows lie;
The young moon sails her silvery crescent nigh,
And Venus comes, to tryst with twilight
true.

Above the summits, clouds of gorgeous hue,
Have draped their sunset-tinted canopy.

The King of Day withdraws his lingering
beams;

From out the sky the dark'ning colors fade;
A brooding quiet, soft and restful seems
To gently fall, as falls the evening shade;
The heavens with twinkling, watching stars
are laid,
And Slumber leads the world to peaceful
dreams.

A WINTER MORNING.

White gleams the earth, o'erlaid with Winter's
 snows;

Sharp stings the air, frost-crystalled, still
 and clear;

Far distant objects, not so far appear;
Athwart the East, Aurora crimson glows;
Across the sky she lightly, deftly throws,
 To western mountain peaks that proudly
 rear,

Her bright "Good Morning," till, her
 beauty's peer

They stand, reflecting amethyst and rose.

VICTORY.

Afar, above the vast, brown, rolling plains,
The mountains rear their heads, serene and
grand,

A tower of strength and beauty in the land.
There, crowned with snow so pure, all regal
reigns

The lofty peak which greatest height attains;
Fair sister peaks appear on every hand,
Like shrouded, ghostly sentinels they stand,
Defying him, who yon proud summit gains.

He who has striven, conquered, all Life's way,
Like him who looks on peaks and plains
below,—

Stands, touched by earliest beams of coming
day,

His features radiant with the welcome glow;
And they who look upon, and love him, know
They see great Victor's resplendent ray.



THE PLUM-BENNER

DEEP IN THE HEART OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN WILDS.

"Fair sister peaks appear on every hand,
Like shrouded ghostly sentinels they stand."—Page 126.

THE MOUNTAINS SPEAK TO ME.

The mountains speak to me ; at dawn of day
When tinted by the morning's rosy fire,
They seem to say, "Dear child, come higher,
higher !

Above the toil-worn, dusty, weary way,
Uplift thine eyes, thy thoughts, and catch a ray,
To waken thee,—to bid thy soul aspire ;
Press on, and win each lofty, pure desire,—
Arise, and with the morning sing thy lay."

All through the day the mountains speak to
me ;

Blue-based, white-peaked, against the azure
sky

They stand in calm, majestic purity,
Their beauty touched by lights that gleam
and die ;

My longing soul, adoring, awed, must cry,
"From Thy grand mountains to Thyself,
more nigh."

TWILIGHT.

The day is fading. On a cloudless sky
The sun reflects a mellow, golden light,
That dims not Venus' beauty silvery bright.
First of the starry train, she hovers nigh,
To bid the dear, departing day, "Good by."
As if to guard her exit from the land,
Sharply outlined, the purple mountains stand,
And rear with grace and strength, their heads
on high.

Night's gathering shadows, trooping from
afar,
Advance, and mark each movement with a star;
Till, like the magic of a lovely dream,
She, with her myriad star-gems, reigns supreme;
So Twilight, does thy wondrous, peaceful
hour,
Proclaim anew, God's miracle of power.





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